Weaponised Imagination:

Sibling Collaborations and Rivalries in the Brontë and Rossetti Families

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Contents:

Abstract:

For the Brontë and Rossetti siblings, familial collaboration shaped their working methods from their earliest juvenilia to the end of their careers. Both sibling sets would continually compare their works and seek advice on how to develop their early writings – a sense of co-dependence they never fully outgrew. This thesis examines the dynamic of these sibling sets from the early need of parental approval; their ambitious juvenilia – and the need to maintain the familial connection such early works provided upon entering the adult world of work – and finally the autobiographical narratives of the surviving siblings. This analysis will explore how these siblings' literary collaborations altered under the cultural expectations of class and gender, as well as familial aspirations. Nevertheless, the support network of childhood writings could be "restored" by recreating the motifs and methodologies of their early juvenilia. *Weaponised Imagination* applies close, comparative readings to works completed by the Brontës' and Rossettis' throughout their careers, which can be applied to literary families throughout history.

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The Brontë studies portion of this thesis would have been more difficult to research without the friendly support from the people of the Brontë Parsonage Museum. Many thanks to Sarah Laycock who was the first to show me Maria Brontë's copy of *The Remains and Poetical Works of Henry Kirke White* – the timing of the relic's return to the Parsonage was rather uncanny. Further gratitude goes to Ann Dinsdale who remembered how fascinated I was by *Remains* and offered to answer any questions I had throughout my thesis – and, of course, for asking me to contribute my thoughts on the relic in *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts.* I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of *The Lost Manuscript*'s editor and publisher, Julia Barnes and Kitty Wright. I would also like to thank my good friend and conference-buddy, Edwin J. Marr, for answering any queries I had about Branwell Brontë's life.

My analysis of the Rossettis could not have been possible without the helpful staff of the Bodleian Library, but especially Colin Harris – his knowledge of the Rossetti archives was immeasurable, and I would like to thank him for introducing me to Frances Rossetti's *Hodge Podge* and diary papers, and a tremendous thank you for showing me Gabriele Rossetti's autobiography (in English and Italian) – just because he thought I would enjoy

it! Chapter Two would not have been possible without these materials. The support of Elizabeth Ludlow must be acknowledged also – I know she wants Maria Rossetti to be recovered in contemporary criticism as much as I do, and without her notes on the rare letters of Maria Rossetti, I would not have benefitted from such a clear insight into Maria's personality beyond her being "the Rossetti who became a nun".

Tremendous thanks to my external examiner, Amber Regis, and my internal examiner, Gill Rudd for reading all of this work I have accumulated over the past three years.

Finally, to my parents, thank you for your support of every kind throughout the length of this thesis and beyond.

‘Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.’

- Jules de Gaultier ‘Le Bovarysme’

(Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1902), p.13

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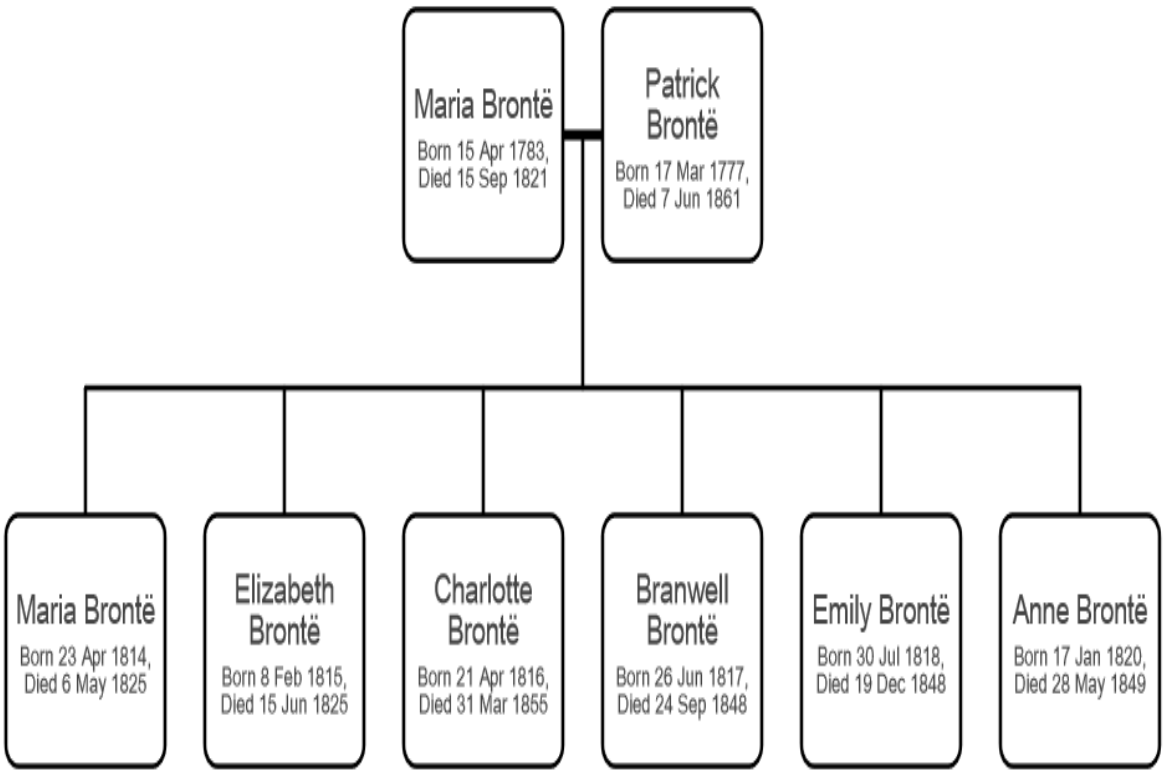
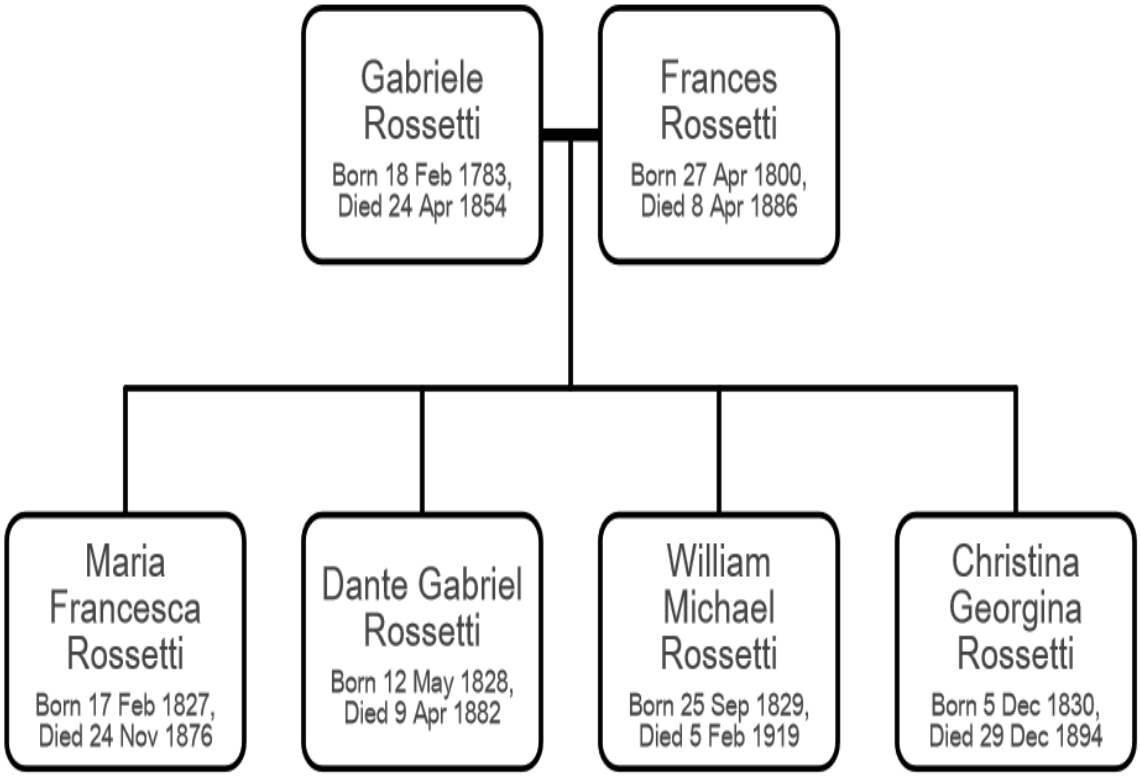
Family Trees:





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INTRODUCTION:

Reuniting the Brontë and Rossetti Families in Criticism

The creative dynamic of literary siblings prepared some of the most celebrated writers of the nineteenth-century for the competitive world of publication. This thesis will focus on the tight-knit childhood collaborations of the Brontë and Rossetti families to demonstrate how familial cooperation shaped their artistic voices. The notion of observing the collaboration of the Brontë and Rossetti families in their *entirety* rather than focusing on individuals and their collaborations with other individuals (as with Charlotte and Branwell, for example) is in itself an original approach to the literature-based biography. Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) states that 'it is right to look our life-accounts bravely in the face now and then and settle them honestly'[1] – this thesis utilises a similar approach: analysing the 'life-accounts' of the Brontë and Rossetti families in the form of their collaborative fiction, from their earliest juvenilia to the surviving siblings' attempts to revive their former co-authors in their work. Most criticism of the collective works of literary families currently use two methodologies: family biographies which map the lives of the entire family in varying detail, or close-textual analysis which focuses predominantly on the works of the more prolific or culturally-relevant kin. This thesis takes a more nuanced third approach and considers the biographical in textual terms. In a unique interpretation of the literary biography genre, this method takes seriously the collaborative juvenile texts of these families as formative exercises in their careers. By conducting in-depth readings of these seminal works, we see how these writers viewed each other – both as co-authors and siblings – as well as how they responded to social impacts on their relationships. To verify these interpretations, this thesis parallels the textual readings of the collaborative interactions with primary materials, such as, the families' written correspondence, journal entries and autobiographical pieces. Furthermore, to observe how these siblings interacted on the page, this analysis principally

[1] Charlotte Brontë (Currer Bell), *Villette* (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1853), p.366.

addresses the raw imagination of the manuscript, including previously unpublished redactions and marginalia. Consequently, it is shown that collaborative literature, from juvenilia to the printed recollections of the surviving sibling, may be interpreted as life-writings, and that these are the crucial foundations for the Brontë and Rossetti family legacies.

The title *Weaponised Imagination* is derived from French philosopher Jules de Gaultier's declaration that imagination 'is the only weapon in the war against reality'.[2] There are few artistic families who embody this stance as thoroughly as the Brontës and Rossettis; making these families ideal subjects of a linear text-based study of collaboration. The members of both families were prolific early writers, completing ambitious projects together in their childhoods, so this study will demonstrate how the siblings were empowered by both their creativity and co-authorship from an early age. However, their imaginations were not always utilised to engage in 'war' – unless on the fictional battlefields of their imaginary childhood kingdoms. The Brontës, for instance, famously forged their fictional childhood kingdoms of Angria and Gondal together, collectively known as 'The Glasstown Confederacy', sharing characters and locations whilst individually maintaining their preferred story arcs. In contrast, as Dolores Rosenblum argues, '[t]he young Rossettis were neither as original nor as intense as the young Brontës; no Angrian myth issued from their collaborations'.[3] Nevertheless, the Rossettis did create family magazines, including *Hodge-Podge* and *The Illustrated Scrapbook*, and also shared a mutual fixation on similar topics, including the chivalric narrative, forbidden romances, and their Italian heritage. These mutual interests, for both families, provided an arsenal of story templates that would contribute to their later work. Although textual parallels between the collaborative juvenilia of both families and their matured writings is a key component of this research, the thesis does not succumb to the critical shortcoming of dismissing juvenilia as mere precursors to genius. Early

[2] Jules de Gaultier, 'Le Bovarysme' (Paris: Société due Mercure de France, 1902), p.13.
[3] Dolores Rosenblum, *Christina Rossetti: The Poetry of Endurance* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), p.36.

writings, Christine Alexander argues, are often retroactively valued as early evidence of a successful author's genius: '[l]ip service is paid to juvenile works in most literary or historical biographies; early writings are often seen as portents of greatness but are quickly dismissed as immature, derivative, or fragmented works.'[4] This research acknowledges Alexander's viewpoint and further builds on the rhetoric of leading juvenilia critics such as Naomi Hetherington and Laurie Langbauer, considering early poems and stories as works in their own right. Whilst hindsight often impairs how critics perceive juvenilia, often imposing textual and biographical assumptions on the work based on contemporary knowledge, the stylistic influence of childhood quasi editors cannot be ignored. These interactive literary apprenticeships moulded the Brontës' and Rossettis' careers, as Langbauer maintains: '[j]uvenile writers would not await the expectations of childhood development […] that they had to grow and mature in order to be good writers. They acted proleptically [sic.]; they wrote and published to seize their future immediately instead.'[5] Were it not for the ongoing criticism of Christine Alexander and Victor Neufeldt, the vast majority of Brontë juvenilia would not be in print, in spite of the preponderance of the siblings' works – especially Branwell's – being classed as such. While the early writings of the Brontës are experiencing a gradual renaissance, the Rossetti juvenilia is often treated as a childish accomplishment than a stepping stone to success. This thesis argues that as children the Brontë and Rossetti siblings saw themselves as serious writers and artists, therefore their work should be interpreted as such. While lacking finesse in places, both sibling groups believed themselves undiscovered talents – the cultural limitations of the world beyond their supportive homes, including those of gender, class and literary fashion, did not hinder their work because they were blissfully unaware of any social constraints. Consequently, within early writings we can observe the unedited ideas and motifs of assured artists, emboldened by the

[4] Christine Alexander, 'Autobiography and juvenilia: the fractured self in Charlotte Brontë's early manuscripts', *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf,* Eds. Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) (154-172), p.154.

[5] Laurie Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition: Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750-1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.4.

support network of their family collaboration.

The Brontës and Rossettis shared everything – motifs, images, literary heroes and a shared desire for creative recognition – and therefore should be studied as a collective. Although this thesis focuses on these sibling circles in order to measure how they matured as people and artists together, there were also inter-generational influences in both families which bolstered their group ambition. Both the Brontë and Rossetti siblings were born to blue-stocking mothers and immigrant poet fathers who contributed to their literary apprenticeships. Chapter One focuses on the effect of the matriarchs upon their children's early fiction. While Maria Brontë, née Branwell, died almost a decade prior to the creation of her children's juvenilia, she left a select but significant literary legacy in her relics. An educated woman, unpublished author of social-reform articles, collector of the *Lady's Magazine* and Romantic anthologies, Maria's creative remains helped shape the motifs and themes of her children's juvenilia. This thesis uses Maria's letters and textual relics to constructs a three-dimensional portrait of her personality, including her recovered copy of *The Remains and Poetical Works of Henry Kirke White*.[6] As this relic only resurfaced in recent years, the inclusion of its text within this analysis means this thesis preludes a promising line for future investigation of into Kirke White's alongside that of the Brontë siblings. Hence, in the study of Maria Brontë, *two* nineteenth-century literary figures, White and Maria Brontë, are recovered for the literary zeitgeist. Equally, Frances Rossetti was a persistent supervisor and editor of her children's early works, particularly in her role as editor of the siblings' collaborative magazine *Hodge-Podge*. Within the artist's paradise she constructed for her husband and children, Frances also inspired co-operation and creative support – teachings which her children would follow throughout their individual careers. Thus, this

[6] Research into the Brontë Edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* began as recently 2018 with *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts,* to which I have contributed a chapter titled 'Reinventing Heaven: The impact of the Brontë edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* upon the ghosts of *Wuthering Heights*'. (Keighley: The Brontë Society, 2018).

research proves what the vast majority of pre-existing biographies do not: the Brontë and Rossetti matriarchs each left literary legacies in their own right.

Where their mothers encouraged them to write, the Brontë and Rossetti patriarchs nurtured them to appear in print. We cannot overlook the fact that published authors already resided in the families' homes in the form of Patrick Brontë and Gabriele Rossetti. Chapter Two of this thesis will analyse the effect of having a successful writer as a father upon both sibling sets. Patrick Brontë was born in Ireland as the son of a farm-labourer; he educated himself enough to earn a scholarship to St. John's College, Cambridge in 1812. He subsequently became a respected clergyman and published poet, with an impressive number of publications for a clergyman isolated on the Yorkshire moors. Although Patrick Brontë did not attain national fame, he was a reputable writer regardless of limitations of location and finance; proof that dedication was as important as talent. Similarly, Gabriele Rossetti was born in Italy as the son of a blacksmith. He too rose to earn a scholarship at the University of Naples, become a patriotic poet and, eventually, a Professor of Italian. Much like Patrick, Gabriele had an autodidactic approach to his work, regardless of circumstances. In fact, Gabriele utilised his exile status to increase the popularity of his works, showing his children how to construct a second 'professional' self for their desired literary field. If we consider 'play' the highest form of research, then the literary competition which emerged between the siblings in seeking approval from both parental figures is not the only evidence of early signs of professional rivalry. Through the fathers we see the Brontë and Rossetti children exploring the concept of a 'literary self'. Both Patrick and Gabriele reinvented themselves when they emigrated to England, and we can see instances of their children following their examples and creating a new 'second-self' both in their juvenilia, and later as they attempted to separate their individual works from that of their siblings in the publishing realm. In exploring the multi-faceted literary personalities of the fathers, this study separates Patrick from the eccentric, sanctimonious shape moulded for him

by unsympathetic biographies, as well as liberating Gabriele's fatherly influence from the shadow of Dante Alighieri. The encouragement of their parents was increasingly esteemed amongst the Brontë and Rossettis, and through the siblings' formative years their entire immediate families participated in their collaboration, either directly or through their own literary voices.

Regardless of a highly supportive environment, the collaboration would have to end as the sibling groups matured. However, as both families attempted to maintain their creative interactions – through exchanging stories and poems for perusal, and offering editorial opinions in missives – it is often difficult to decide when juvenilia ends and adult writings begin. In fact, as Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster observe, the definition of '"childhood" has no firm limits' in nineteenth-century "childhood" writings. Branwell Brontë's 'massive body of early writings', for instance, 'even those he wrote when he was thirty-one, are commonly referred to as "juvenilia"'[7], and this is the case for much of the Brontë siblings' body of work. Likewise, it is difficult to distinguish when to stop referring to the Rossetti siblings' works as 'juvenilia', as many of the pieces published when they were adults were redrafted and reimagined poetry and prose from their childhood. Serena Trowbridge notes this distinction is particularly problematic when it comes to Christina Rossetti's works. Her work is almost infantilised by her William Michael who 'designated' many of her poems as juvenilia, despite them being written when she was over eighteen years old and already published. Nevertheless, William Michael's reputation as the family editor and biographer has ensured that, 'as with so many of his decisions about his sister's poetry, the [juvenilia] label has stuck.'[8] This is possible because criticism does not define "juvenile writings" by the physical age of the author, but by their artistic maturity. A transition from juvenilia to adult writings implies a sense of creative coming-of-age, measured by a

[7] Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, Eds. 'Introduction', *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) (1-10), p.2.
[8] Serena Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.53.

development of 'structure and language, as well as emotional content'.[9] Although many early writings can be deemed 'unpolished', this thesis classifies juvenilia as fiction completed – not before the siblings "matured" their styles – but before they "outgrew" their collaborative fiction.

Chapters Three and Four of this thesis will verify how imagination was "weaponised" yet again in a futile attempt to continue the collaboration, and in order to negotiate the new societal pressures which arose as they entered adulthood. The Brontë and Rossetti siblings had their co-operation disrupted by some of the siblings being required to leave home – and the supportive circle of their co-authors – in order to find work. Inevitably, collaboration faltered and writing became a method of reassessing oneself. As Sally Shuttleworth argues, juvenilia grew into a space to explore 'embattled selfhood, shying away from interpretative penetration' as well as 'concerns with the instabilities of psychological and gender identity, which fuel later work'.[10] Chapter Three of this thesis will discuss how the Brontë and Rossetti sisters strived to return to the unrestricted support of collaboration as they became increasingly aware of the limitations placed on women, in wider society as well as the publishing houses. By examining how the Brontës and Rossettis revised their juvenile themes and characters for publication, we are granted an insight into how gender expectation shaped their publications. Both the Brontë and Rossetti sisters altered their graphic childhood imaginings into works of equal passion, but tackled much more "feminine" subjects: romance, teaching, childhood, and love. While the sisters sought to explore less romantic ideals and include politics, domestic violence and theological denigration in their later writing, wider society deprived the women of the gender equality and mutual respect they experienced with their brothers in the supportive space of juvenilia. These women became hyper-aware of inequality between the sexes and, as a result, created the proto-feminist works that are venerated in contemporary criticism. Studies of

[9] Ibid.
[10] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Bronte and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.101.

female subjectivity in the long nineteenth-century should return to the juvenilia to demonstrate the prospect of equality these women came to expect in childhood. Keeping with this theme of women feeling overlooked, Chapters Three and Four will utilise texts frequently ignored by critics. Unfortunately, this includes the majority of Maria Rossetti's works. When Maria decided to pursue the autonomous life of an Anglican nun, she effectively recused herself from the family's literary legacy – yet her surviving texts demonstrate her observant nature when examining the status of women. This chapter will create a far more nuanced depiction of Maria than previous biographies and critical readings have shown, for instance, Henrietta Garnett's *Wives and Stunners* simply describes Maria as the 'Rossetti who became a nun', dismissing her later literary accomplishments to the attached footnotes.[11] It will also analyse how her separation from the siblings' shared desire affected both Maria and her siblings, particularly her sister Christina who felt cheated of sisterly solidarity in the male-dominated world of publishing. Struggling to comprehend the dramatic shift in how gender was being perceived in her immediate circle, Christina constructed her 1850 novella *Maude.* Written on the threshold of female piety and her fragile association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, this novella is often considered "immature" when compared to Christina's poetry and hence largely disregarded, yet Maude encapsulates the sense of abandonment the literary woman feels when thrust under the microscope of "ideal" femininity.

The Brontë and Rossetti brothers, meanwhile were attempting to obtain "ideal" nineteenth-century masculinity, either as the breadwinner or the bearer of the entire family's creative

[11] This thesis will create a far more nuanced depiction of Maria than previous biographies and critical readings have shown – for instance Henrietta Garnett's *Wives and Stunners* simply describes Maria as the 'Rossetti who became a nun', dismissing her later literary accomplishments to the attached footnotes. (London: Macmillan, 2012), p.6. However, please note that the volume of original materials of Maria's that thesis can incorporate is restricted due to her later vocation. Following her initiation into the Anglican All Saints' Sisterhood in 1876, Maria was required to destroy many of the relics of her early fiction and correspondence as part of her vows to lead a humbler and more private existence. (As emphasised in Mary Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.16.)

aspirations. As will be explored in Chapter Four, the culture of the era appeared to be designed for ambitious young men, and so the Brontë and Rossetti brothers – chiefly the only/eldest sons, Branwell and Dante Gabriel – carried the literary dreams of their former co-authors as well as their own into the world of art. Much like their sisters, the brothers were torn between how fashionable literature and societal expectations of masculinity told them they *should* be acting and the individual personalities constructed in childhood. Although the juvenilia, most notably that of Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, began in collaboration with their independent mothers and sisters, their depictions of the sexes devolved into pre-existing notions of action-driven men and the pedestalled woman. These men developed new 'marketable' images of themselves as artists and sought out new *brotherhoods* to replace the support network they had enjoyed in childhood. Despite the Rossetti brothers often empowering female characters in their work, both they and Branwell faced condemnation from their once co-authors and sisters due to the disrespect of women they observed in their brothers' work. The result was a 'read-and-respond' series of writing – while the sisters' fiction questioned their brothers' intentions, Branwell, Dante Gabriel and William Michael compelled their siblings to recognise the pressures of being a nineteenth-century adult male. Once again, underrated feminist texts are celebrated in this thesis as this chapter reinterprets the works of the Brontë and Rossetti sisters as deconstructions on their brothers' patriarchal visions – most significantly in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). In spite of the overwhelming fame of the Brontë sisters, Marianne Thormählen argues that Anne's reputation and works 'were covered by a "veil" which few bothered to lift until the mid-twentieth century.'[12] Nevertheless, Anne's critical resurgence has

[12] Marianne Thormählen, 'Standing Alone: Anne Brontë out of the Shadow', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.39, Issue.4 (2014) (330-40), p.331. Even within the triumvirate of the sisterhood, Charlotte and Emily are more revered than youngest, "retiring" sibling, Anne, whom Catherine Paula Han describes as a '"sort of literary Cinderella" even by her admirers [...] remembered for being unmemorable.' Catherine Paula Han, 'The Myth of Anne Brontë', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.42, No.1. (2017) (48-59), pp.48-50. Anne's limited legacy – which subsequently impedes close-reading of the majority of her early work – is believed to be due to her sister Charlotte after Anne's death. John Sutherland explains that Charlotte, then the surviving Brontë sibling conducted an 'editorial bonfire', in which she burned her brother Branwell's scandalous novel and Anne's 'unsuccessful' poetry, including some of her juvenilia. Sutherland speculates whether this was intended

yet to raise her to the heights of her sisters. This research will reunite Anne with both her sisters and Branwell and argue that, as well as being a commentary on domestic abuse and female agency in wider society, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is also a far more private observation of how perception leads to destruction. Anne grants her "hero" Huntingdon the same flaws as Branwell and the chauvinistic literary giants he wished to mimic, asking her brother and other young men to recognise the toxicity of hyper-masculinity. Thus, for both Brontë and Rossetti families, the themes they shared in their 'playground' of juvenilia became a 'battleground' of perception in which the siblings took each other's themes and styles and utilised them for debate. As a result, the struggle to become 'Brontë-esque' and 'Rossettian' began.

Criticism came to redefine 'Brontë' and 'Rossetti' as literary forms, not family names, and some siblings came to be outshone by others despite both sibling groups beginning on an equal footing in juvenilia. The linear methodology of this thesis charts the extraneous social variables which caused these varying levels of success. However, it is less concerned with how we perceive the siblings, rather than how they regarded each other. Once acclimatised into adulthood, collaboration still played a part in the dynamics of the Brontës and Rossettis, but creative connection decreased dramatically. The final chapter of this thesis shows how the surviving siblings of these families, Charlotte Brontë and William Michael respectively, attempted to resurrect the supportive environment of childhood in their autobiographical writings. The most poignant examples of reconstructing the sibling groups' childhood methodology can be found in Charlotte's largely autobiographical novel *Shirley* (1850) and William Michael Rossetti's family memoir, contained within *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters* (1895) – both written when these writers became the last surviving sibling. Charlotte

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'to generate a kind of protective mystique' or rather 'intended to background them in the general enterprise of their joint creation.' (John Sutherland, *The Brontësaurus: An A-Z of Charlotte, Emily & Anne Brontë (& Branwell)* (London: Icon Books Ltd. 2016), p.155.) Although this limits the original material in order to study Anne, this thesis will extensively study what remains in order to reinstate Anne as her sisters' literary peer.

Brontë and William Michael Rossetti became custodians of their erstwhile co-authors once their siblings had died. In their grief, they attempted to recreate their connection with their siblings by mirroring the childhood atmosphere and their respective juvenilia in these works. When considering how Charlotte viewed her lost siblings, many critics examine her 'Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell', prefacing her 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey*, however I believe that Charlotte was too preoccupied with her readers' preconceived notions of her sisters to fully grieve her personal loss – and Branwell is not mentioned at all. In *Shirley* however, written as her family was slowly diminishing, we will observe how Charlotte attempted to maintain a connection with her siblings by emulating personalities and respective works through her characters and spaces. The privacy *Shirley* afforded for this catharsis is also significant – unlike her Biographical Notice, Charlotte's contemporaries would not recognise allusions to her siblings or their early writings, and this allowed her to maintain the tight-knit and guarded atmosphere of their childhood co-authorship. William Michael could not exercise the same secrecy. All but one of his siblings had gained hosts of admirers, who were seeking to know more about the family. Thus, in due reverence to his later family-role, William Michael became the biographer of his siblings lives and recollected their collaboration directly – not in allegory and parallels as Charlotte could. However, William Michael was also writing as the losses occurred, with his ailing sister Christina contributing as many of her own recollections as she could prior to her death. This thesis celebrates *His Family-Letters* as a final act of collaboration between the Rossetti siblings. Finally, Chapter Five will consider how these elegiac works potentially contribute to our contemporary perceptions of these families and, more significantly, how the siblings viewed their early collaboration and how it shaped their writing styles. In childhood, the Brontës and Rossettis considered each other co-authors and colleagues, and this thesis will restore this view in current criticism.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Mother(s) of Invention: Recovering the Literary Legacies of Maria Brontë and Frances Rossetti

Figure 1. Unknown Artist, 'Portrait of Maria Branwell Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, pre-1812)
Figure 2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Mrs. Gabriele Rossetti' (Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, 1852)

Critical Renaissance of the Matriarchs' Relics

William Michael Rossetti described birth and motherhood as a 'tie that subsisted in fullest force at the first moment of one's existence, and which has continued in almost or quite the like force ever since'.[1] In literature, as well as wider nineteenth-century culture, Sharon Marcus argues, mothers were 'idealized figures of conduct literature and life-writing'.[2] However, the purpose of this chapter is to establish how the mothers of the Brontë and Rossetti children, Maria (née Branwell, 1783-1821) and Frances (née Polidori, 1800-1886), became exemplars of how to comport oneself, not in life, but in literature. The intellectual relics of these women are frequently disregarded by biographers and literary critics, as neither woman was published in her own lifetime, and yet their manuscripts as well as their

[1] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Some Reminiscences,* Vol. 2 (London: George Allen, 1899), pp.525-526.
[2] Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2007), p.17.

influence over their children's early "research"[3] of popular fiction, are equally overlooked. This analysis will recover both Maria and Frances' intellectual properties and examine how the work of these women helped to shape the early collaborative efforts, and later professional conduct, of their children.

The literary legacies of Maria and Frances have been consigned to the footnotes of those of their children. In biographies, these women are regarded through the 'limited view of female capability'[4] that Carol Marie Engelhardt states emerged during their era. As Regency maidens became Victorian mothers, perception of women in publishing was experiencing retrogression. Alison Adburgham maintains that progress made by fin-de-siècle writers of the previous century, such as Hannah More and Elizabeth Carter, halted as 'women's magazines became ever more obsessively domestic'.[5] During this transitional period authoresses and female-targeted publications such as *The Lady's Magazine*, 'became more and more Victorian, less and less individual', from as early as the first year of the Victorian age.[6] Virtue was valued above individual talent as a culture of worship for what Elaine Showalter christens 'the spirit of Victorian womanhood'[7] emerged and "she" was christened: the Angel-of-the-House. This fictional figure idealised, as Dinah Roe perceives, 'domestic skills and silent, long-suffering nobility'.[8] This pedestalled image was extolled by patriarchal writers, most famously Coventry Patmore, who coined the 'Angel in the House' term.[9] This

[3] Although the Brontë and Rossetti children were not always actively "studying" successful fiction, their early exposure to the texts endorsed by their mothers did influence their early works, as this chapter will verify.

[4] Carol Marie Engelhardt, 'Chapter Eleven: The Paradigmatic Angel in the House: The Virgin Mary and Victorian Anglicans', pp.159-171, in *Woman of Faith in Victorian Culture*, Eds. Anne Hogan and Andrew Bradstock (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p.160.

[5] Alison Adburgham, *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women's Magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), p.271.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Elaine Showalter, 'Killing the Angel in the House: The Autonomy of Women Writers' *The Antioch Review*, 1st edn (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch College, 1992), (207-220), p.207.

[8] Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011), p.17.

[9] For further reading, please refer to: Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: Macmillan, 1863) and Virginia Woolf, 'Professions for Women (1932)' in *The Death of the Moth, and other Essays,*

chapter will separate fact from feminized myth and exhibit the blue-stocking Brontë and Rossetti matriarchs' own literary capabilities and the effect this creative encouragement had on their children's juvenilia.

Unfortunately, Maria Brontë has been mythologised to the role of intangible spirit which haunted her motherless children following her premature death in 1821: '[a]nd so', Elizabeth Gaskells' *Life of Charlotte Brontë* laments, 'Maria Branwell fades out of sight; we have no more direct intercourse with her.'[10] Her absence from her children's formative years supposedly negates any notion that she left a literary presence in the Parsonage. Her sole 'contribution' to her daughters' novels is supposedly reflected in the recurring Brontë trope of the nomadic, motherless protagonist. As Laura Peters notes: '[o]ne can hardly open a novel by […] the Brontë sisters […] without stumbling over at least one orphan.'[11] These characters – such as Jane Eyre, Adèle Varens, Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw, Heathcliff and Helen Huntingdon, to name but a few – must reintegrate 'back into a domestic space' having lost one of its 'constitutive principles' in the form of the mother.[12] Although Maria's legacy is predominantly concerned with her death, her material remains are largely disregarded. This chapter will rectify this critical indifference and demonstrate how Maria's material legacy, more significantly textual remnants, impacted the Brontë juvenilia. Deborah Lutz argues that 'possessions that outlive their owners' serve as 'remnants of selfhood' through which we can establish the deceased owner's personality.[13] We can comprehend why the Brontë children hoped to peruse Maria's belongings and favoured texts in order to construct an image of a

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accessible at ebooks.au, 2016, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91d/chapter27.html> [accessed 16th September 2016].

[10] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.1. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), p.36.

[11] Laura Peters, *Orphan Texts: Victorian orphans, culture and empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.1.

[12] Carolyn Dever, *Death and the Mother from Dickens to Freud: Victorian Fiction and the Anxiety of Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.2.

[13] Deborah Lutz, *The Brontë Cabinet: Three Lives in Nine Objects* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015), p.xxi.

'mind whence [their] own sprang.'[14] Literary vestiges of Maria which were available to the Brontës from an early age were her Bible and preferred novels and anthologies, brought to the Parsonage with her from her hometown of Penzance. Christine Alexander emphasises that her select library 'functioned as a family memorial to her' following her death.[15] One of the most vital texts within this library, and the focus of this chapter's textual analysis in regard to the Brontës, is her edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White.*[16] [Fig.3.]

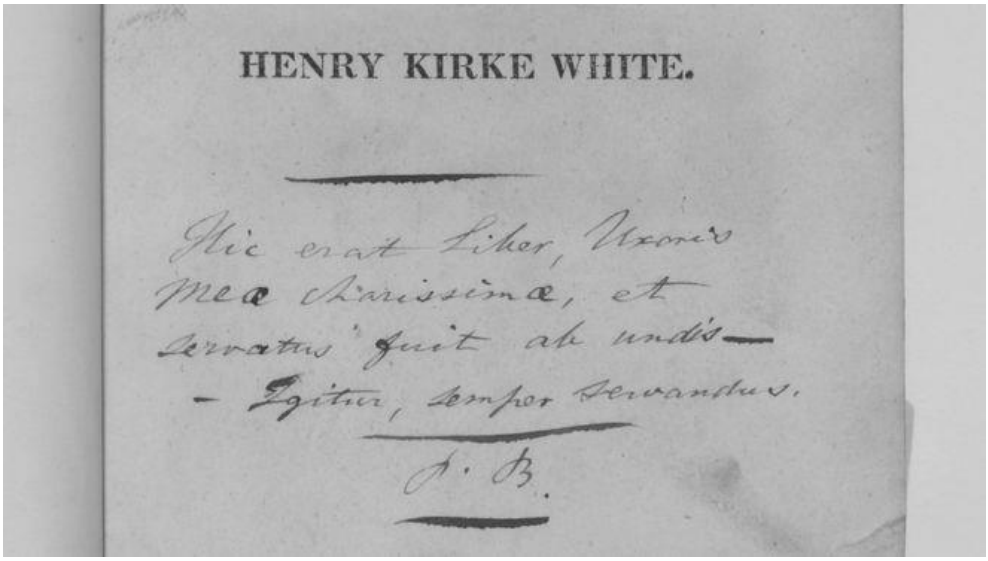

Figure 3. Front-Leaf of The Brontë Edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White,* Ed. Robert Southey, Two Vols. (London: Printed by W. Wilson, 1810) (The Brontë Parsonage Museum) Patrick's Latin Inscription reads: 'The is the book of my dearest wife and it was saved from the waves. So then it will always be preserved.'

The significance of this recently recovered piece of Brontëana is founded in the important new information it promises to reveal, not only in regards to Maria's favoured poetry, but

[14] Charlotte Brontë (upon first reading Maria's 1812 correspondence to Patrick) in a letter to Ellen Nussey, 16th February 1850, in *A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997) (266-267), p.267.

[15] Christine Alexander, 'Early Ambitions: Charlotte Brontë, Henry Kirke White and Robert Southey', *Brontë Studies,* 43:1 (2018) 14-31, p.21.

[16] Henry Kirke White, Ed. Robert Southey *The Remains of HENRY KIRKE WHITE, of Nottingham*, Two Volumes [The Brontë Edition] (London: Printed by W. Wilson, 1810) All further references to this anthology refer to the Brontë Edition and will be abbreviated to *Remains.* All further references will be given parenthetically.
For further reading in the retrieval of this Brontë relic, please refer to: 'Grant Information', *Friends of the National Libraries* (2017) <https://www.friendsofnationallibraries.org.uk/remains-henry-kirke-white-annotations-bronte-family> [accessed 8th May 2018], and David Barnett 'Unpublished Charlotte Brontë writings return to Haworth in mother's book', *The Guardian* (2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jul/20/unpublished-charlotte-bronte-writings-return-to-haworth-in-mothers-book> [accessed 22nd September 2017].

also in the marginalia tipped into its pages. Within the margins of the anthology are practice lines from the children's mathematics and spelling lessons, absentminded graffiti, shorthand and sketches highly reminiscent of their Glasstown characters. Through these doodles, the children often respond to and/or interact with Kirke White's text, often marking their favourite lines and correcting the structure of the verse. Consequently, we can see parallels to Kirke White's preferred motifs and storylines.

While the Brontë children were deprived of their mother's direct encouragement, Frances Rossetti maintained a continuous presence throughout her children's lives and works. In the vast majority of Rossetti biographies, Frances' presence is that of a "domestic goddess" with William Michael first exalting her 'retirement and repose of character, and […] devotion to home duties.'[17] Consequently, when her presence is recalled in the Rossetti myth, Frances is depicted as the calm amidst the creative storm of her zealous children and radical husband. Within this trailblazing family, Frances matches Kathryn Hughes's category of a 'model of perfect Christian lady-hood', increased by the "ideally Victorian" vocations she occupied throughout her lifetime: governess; wife; mother and pious humanitarian.[18] However, she was the only member of her immediate family to not become a professional author. Although she completed many manuscripts, diaries and marginalia, Mary Arseneau observes that the vast majority of her work remains unpublished and has, subsequently, 'fallen out of scholarly view'.[19] This chapter will focus predominantly on a series of manuscripts transcribed by and contributed to by Frances between 20th May and 15th August 1843. These

[17] William Michael Rossetti, Ed., *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, Vol.1,* (London: Roberts Brothers, 1895), p.21.
[18] Kathryn Hughes, *The Victorian Governess* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), p.48.
[19] Mary Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p.48.

copies were all contributions to a 'family magazine' Frances established in the Rossetti household named *Hodge-Podge*.[20] [Fig.4.]

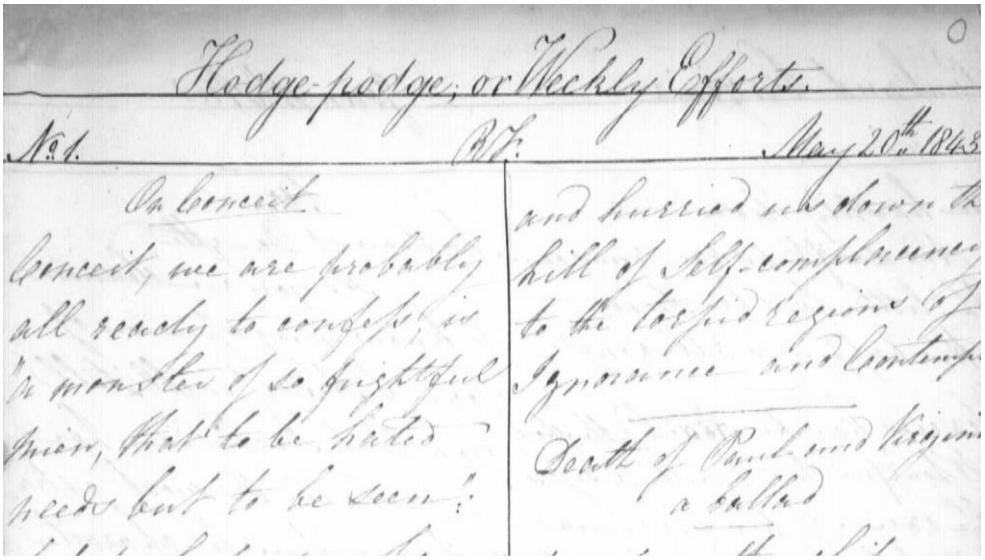

Figure 4. Frances Rossetti, Ed. *Hodge-Podge* (The Rossetti Family Magazine), Issue 1. MS. (University of British Columbia, dated 20th May 1843)

This domestic periodical is rarely analysed in criticism, and yet it is constructed entirely of Rossetti juvenilia and journal style accounts of key moments in the Rossetti household. The juvenile name of *Hodge-Podge,* meaning 'a confused mixture'[21], is indicative of the multidisciplinary nature of the magazine's contents. Each contribution was dependent upon the family's personal circumstances and the sibling's individual creative inclinations - ironic when we consider its young contributors could not even agree on how its title was spelt.[22] In examining this varied omnibus of essays, poems, short stories and diary entries we can see the active role Frances played in the early literary efforts of the Rossetti siblings, as well as the themes and motifs the Rossetti siblings would carry into their Pre-Raphaelite careers. Regardless of preferred art form, ability and gender, Frances instilled editorial guidelines and

[20] Frances Rossetti, Ed. *Hodge-Podge* (c.1843) MS. Facs. c.95 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[21] Definition taken from *The Oxford Dictionary of English,* 3rd Edition. Ed. Angus Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.848.
[22] Or *Hotchpotch,* both spellings were used sporadically throughout the lifetimes of each sibling, however *Hodge-Podge* is the name Frances Rossetti uses in her personal drafts.

deadlines for submissions, essentially becoming editor to her children's works.[23] The periodical was made to appear as authentic as possible, and Frances approached her editorial position accordingly. Her father, Gaetano Polidori, then established himself as publisher, utilising his in-home printing press. Thus, a familial and collaborative atmosphere was instituted. Through *Hodge-Podge,* the Rossetti children were taught to examine each other's work and voice their opinions, and as William Michael asserts 'always set store by that utterance of my mother'[24], which they would sustain throughout their careers and correspondence. The Rossetti matriarch had always maintained 'a passion for intellect' and her ultimate wish 'was that my husband should be distinguished for intellect and my children too.'[25] Through *Hodge-Podge,* Frances could supervise and ensure creative dedication and professional collaboration in her family. Ostensibly, Frances may have appeared to be the "angel-of-the-house", but the distinctly 'Bohemian twist' she gave her home meant she actively nurtured the Rossettis to become; as Roe summarises: 'not captains of industry, innovators in science, or leading political lights, but true artists.'[26]

Children invariably vie for the attention of their mother, whether in their achievements or simply trying to prove themselves worthy of her affection. In exploring how each mother influenced her children in their individual works, this chapter will examine how one's presence, encouragement and collaboration, encouraged and promoted the talents of her children, while the other's legacy inspired and gave guidance to her own from beyond the grave

[23] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.39.
[24] William Michael Rossetti, Ed., *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, (London: Roberts Brothers, 1895), p.22.
[25] Frances Rossetti cited in *His Family-Letters,* Ed. William Michael Rossetti, Vol.1, p.22.
[26] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.23.

Let Me In!: Critical Renaissance of the Matriarchs' Relics

'[I]n the death of a mother,' William Michael observes, 'there is something which, more than aught else, severs one from one's past'.[27] The brusqueness of Rossetti's "severing" image mirrors the abruptness of Frances's death in 1886. Contrastingly, the Brontë siblings had to endure the prematurity of Maria Brontë's death from a young age.[28] Her presence in the Parsonage survived solely in the memories of Patrick and Aunt Branwell and her material relics.[29] However, following Maria's death, Patrick proved an unforthcoming custodian; He kept many handwritten examples of Maria's character and intelligence, such as the manuscript to her unpublished article 'The Advantages of Poverty in Religious Concerns'[30], as well as the love letters she wrote during their courtship of 1812, but these relics were not freely accessible to the children. In fact, in a letter of 1850 – after Branwell, Emily and Anne had already died - Charlotte implies she was the sole sibling to ever read Maria's missives[31], writing to Ellen Nussey that 'for the first time'[32] 'Papa put into my hands a little packet of

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[27] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Some Reminiscences,* Vol. 2 (London: George Allen, 1899), p.525-526.

[28] Maria Branwell Brontë died 15th September 1821, the ages of her children at the time of her death were as follows: Maria, aged seven; Elizabeth, aged five or six; Charlotte, aged five; Branwell, aged four; Emily, aged three and Anne, aged 18 months.

[29] It is possible that the children retained memories of their mother, however there is not any evidence of this in their correspondence.

[30] Much like her copy of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* [see Fig.3], Patrick also wrote upon the sole manuscript of 'Advantages': 'The above was written by my dear Wife [sic.], and sent for insertion in one of the periodical publications – Keep it, as a memorial of her.' Although declared a 'memorial', none of the Brontë siblings mention this article in their journals, manuscripts or correspondence. It is difficult to establish if this article inspired any literary or social allusions in the siblings' works since, as Barker observes, the article is largely a repeat of 'the usual Methodist palliative'. As Aunt Branwell was, naturally, also raised Methodist, and the children were encouraged to engage in religious debate (as explored in Chapter Two of this thesis), the siblings' exploration of Methodism (nor the romanticising of poverty which the article explores, as Patrick can be accused of similar over-sentimentalising in his *Cottage Poems* (1811) which argues 'that he, who would be truly happy, must be truly religious' – the 'Advertisement' to *Cottage Poems* in *Brontëana* (pp.19-21), p.21) cannot be attributed to 'Advantages' alone.
Incidentally, Juliet Barker argues, although Patrick's dedication explains the manuscript was sent for potential publication in a periodical, it 'does not appear to have been published.' Barker believes Maria's argument that penury 'when combined with religion, was an actual benefit', could have been considered too 'callous in its simplicity' for publication, in *The Brontës,* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.79. – especially with the increasing social awareness of the mid-nineteenth century instigated by writers such as Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell.

[31] As will be explored in 'Chapter Five: Last Sibling Standing' of this thesis.

[32] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, 16th February 1850, in *A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997) (266-267), p.267.

letters and papers – telling me that they were Mamma's and that I might read them'.[33] Charlotte does not share with Ellen if Patrick explained to his daughter why he kept these letters to himself until this moment but we cannot help but sympathise with her siblings, who apparently never saw their mother's words. This is not the first instance of Patrick preventing his children from studying the 'memoranda that she did exist'.[34] A decade later in a letter to Hartley Coleridge, Charlotte also recollected how as a child she would examine the copies of the *Lady's Magazine* which her aunt and mother brought with them from their hometown of Penzance. 'One black day,' Charlotte writes,' 'my father burned them because they contained foolish love-stories.'[35] Charlotte would later mourn the loss of the Branwell sisters' copies of the magazine in her 1849 novel *Shirley,* in which she imagines protagonist Caroline Helstone pouring over the 'light literature' which had once belonged to her Aunt Mary: some venerable *Lady's Magazines*, that had once performed a sea-voyage with their owner, and undergone a storm, and whose pages were stained with salt water'.[36] Evidently, the inherent romance of Maria's relics, were too close for Patrick's comfort, potentially explaining his reluctance to share her love letters with the children. The burning of Maria's copies of the *Lady's Magazine* was particularly regrettable as it belonged to a collection of 'very few articles'[37] which survived her relocation to her husband's house. As Maria eagerly awaited the day of her wedding, and her bridal trousseau, she would receive a letter from her sister with an: 'account of the vessel in which she had sent my box stranded upon the coast of Devonshire, in consequence of which the box was dashed to pieces with the violence of the sea, and all my little property […] being swallowed up in the mighty deep'[38].

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[33] Ibid., p.266.

[34] To utilise Heathcliff's description of Cathy's absence in *Wuthering Heights* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), p.270.

[35] Charlotte Brontë, draft letter to Hartley Coleridge, December 1840 in Margaret Smith (ed.) *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One: 1829-1847* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.237.
The effect of the *Lady's Magazine* upon Charlotte's teenage writings will be explored further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

[36] Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley: A Tale* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1888), p.263.

[37] Maria Branwell letter to Patrick Brontë, 18th November 1812 in Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), (55-56), p.56.

[38] Maria Branwell letter to Patrick Brontë, 18th November 1812 in *The Brontës*, p.56.

Consequently, as this chapter will later explore, shipwrecks became synonymous with division from a loved one. Moreover, Siobhan Carroll argues, this motif also came to symbolise having to make one's 'own way in the world' without parental guidance.[39] For instance, *Agnes Grey* (1847) parallels the 'deracinating economic forces'[40] of Maria's own shipwreck. Maria laments the impact the accident may have upon her future husband: 'My dear saucy Pat, […] I suppose you never expected to be much the richer for me but I am sorry to inform you that I am still poorer than I thought myself'.[41] Equally when Agnes's father invests with a merchant in order to increase the family's finances, her mother implores: 'God grant he not be disappointed!'[42] Unfortunately, 'the vessel which contained our fortune had been wrecked, and gone to the bottom with all its stores'[43], and as a result Agnes leaves her happy home to achieve an income as a governess. Thus, the shipwreck was a metaphor for the removal of a mother's influence. The Brontës recovered Maria's presence by interacting with one of the rare remnants that endured Patrick's ownership and also was 'saved from the waves […] [s]o then it will always be preserved'.[44] Intriguingly, what "remained" of Maria Brontë in her children's literary consciousness was in fact Henry Kirke White's *Remains.*

In Maria's letter to Patrick where she describes the shipwreck her possessions suffered, she notes the bitter irony that this occurred 'about the time when you [Patrick] were writing the description of your imaginary shipwreck.'[45] Although she does not specify which of Patrick's many poems or short stories contained this fictitious wreck, when Patrick published *The Rural Minstrel: A Miscellany of Descriptive Poems* (1813), there was one verse which

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[39] Siobhan Carroll, '"Play You Must": *Villette* and the Nineteenth-Century Board Game', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* 39:1 (2017) (33-47), p.33.
[40] Ibid., p.40.
[41] Maria Branwell letter to Patrick Brontë, dated 18th November 1812 in *Life in Letters* (270-271), p.270.
[42] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey* in *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), p.288.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Patrick's Latin inscription in the front-leaf of *Remains.*
[45] Maria letter to Patrick dated 18th November 1812, in *A Life in Letters* (270-271), p.270.

described a metaphorical storm: 'Lines Addressed to a Lady on her Birthday'[46], dedicated to Maria. In the poem, Patrick tells Maria that the 'mutual joy' they share will overcome 'clouds o'ercast' and 'whirlwinds'. He argues:

> Should thunders roll,
>
> From pole to pole,
>
> And shakes the fearful world;
>
> E'en then, thy sweet society would cheer the gloom.[47]

The tempestuous imagery continues as Patrick argues, '[s]hould ocean heave, with adverse gales, | Or prosperous winds, inflate the sails'[48], the only thing which will be 'to blank oblivion hurled' will be his 'keener griefs'.[49] Unnervingly, it seems Maria was always tied to fictional storms, and her relics were romanticised equally. The pages of *Remains* contain the same stains of salt water Charlotte recalled of the *Lady's Magazine* in *Shirley*[50], a testament to the perilous journey it survived; but the sense of "fate" tied to this enduring edition was increased by the connection between their father and the author. Patrick, like his daughters, believed writing to be an opportunity for interaction with those they had loved and lost. Undoubtedly, this belief was strengthened when reading *Remains;* which gave him the opportunity not only to reminiscence about his wife, but also peruse the words of an old friend. Kirke White had overcome his humble background, born the son of a Nottingham butcher, to become a "sizar" at St. John's College, Cambridge in 1805. "Sizars", Dudley Green explains, were scholarship students who 'receive financial assistance from the college', and in return the students would 'undertake certain duties [for example] to record the names of those who failed to attend the university sermon'.[51] Despite their extensive functions, the sizars often struggled to balance their finances. *Remains* includes a transcript of a letter to

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[46] Patrick Brontë, 'Lines Addressed to a Lady on her Birthday' in *The Rural Minstrel: A Miscellany of Descriptive Poems* (Halifax: Printed by P.K. Holden, 1813), pp.43-53.
[47] Ibid. p.48.
[48] Patrick Brontë, 'Lines Addressed to a Lady on her Birthday', p.50.
[49] Ibid., p.48.
[50] Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley,* p.263.
[51] Dudley Green, *Patrick Brontë: Father of Genius* (Stroud: The History Press, 2010), p.122.

Kirke White's mother, dated 26th October 1805, in which he explains that he has borrowed the bills from an economical fellow undergraduate in order to improve his spending. He explains that his colleague had come over from a foreign land, though Southey's edit omits where, 'with 10l in his pocket, and has no friends, or any income or emolument whatever, except what he receives for his Sizarship; yet he does support himself […] very genteelly' (*Remains,* Vol.1 p.195). The respect for the experienced Sizar in question is palpable, yet Southey's careful edit has the "genteel" scholar's name redacted to 'Mr ***' (195). Patrick, however, amends this, placing a small obelus (†) beside the omission and in the right-hand margin simply adds the note, "Brontë"; claiming he was the immigrant in question. Later editions of *Remains,* restore his name and therefore verify his assertion. Visibly proud of his association with Kirke White, Patrick wished to make it clear to his family that the admiration was mutual, linking himself to the poet. Although the Brontë Edition did not originally contain Patrick's name, Alexander emphasises the 'amazing coincidence' that Maria Branwell should have owned a book which bore a connection to her future husband, speculating: 'Did Maria remember this when she first met Patrick Brontë? If so, she would already have had an insight into his thrift and strength of character.'[52] The almost preternatural ties between Maria, Patrick and Kirke White must have appealed to the children preoccupied with the Romantic and Gothic.

[52] Alexander, 'Early Ambitions: Charlotte Brontë, Henry Kirke White and Robert Southey', p.21.

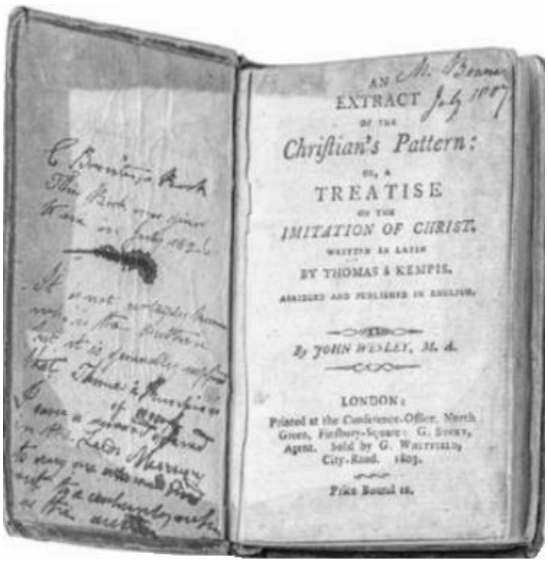

Figure 5. Maria Branwell Brontë's copy of *An Extract of the Christian's Pattern or, A Treatise on the Imitation of Christ,* English Translation by John Wesley (London: Print by G. Stoey, 1803) The Bonnell Collection.

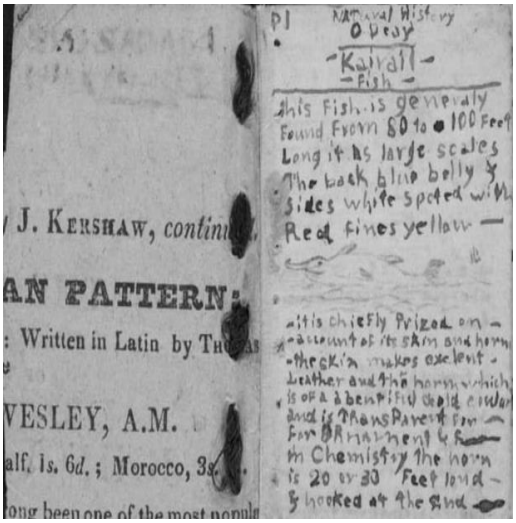

Figure 6. Branwell Bronte, 'Blackwood's Magazine, July 1829' (Houghton Library, Harvard University)

Interacting with books through marginalia, as Patrick does, in order to enhance the memory of previous owners was an intertextual method the Brontës had previously engaged. Charlotte, for instance, interacts with her mother's memory through another piece of Maria's library that was recovered from the sea: her copy of *An Extract of the Christian's Pattern*. [Fig.5.] On the top-right corner of its front leaf, this water damaged edition bears the signature: 'M Branwell July 1807'; however, the inside cover contains her daughter's claim of ownership: 'C Brontë's Book […] July 1826'. While outwardly this seems a poignant display of inheritance, Christine Nelson notes the timing of Charlotte's inscription: 'A month after

Patrick came home with the set of toy soldiers that would send the Brontë siblings into a frenzy of creative play.'[53] Nelson contemplates how this book may not have been as exciting as the Duke of Wellington figure Charlotte seized from her brother; but this text did play a key role in the beginnings of the Brontë juvenilia. Branwell, for instance, hand made his first of many miniature magazines – his diminutive interpretation of periodicals such as *Blackwoods*. In yet another tenuous tie between Maria and her children's juvenilia, Branwell used 'a scrap from an advertisement' for a new edition of *An Extract of the Christian's Pattern* to 'fashion the cover' of one of these editions.[54] [Fig.6.] This is not the sole example of the Brontës integrating lost family members into their juvenilia through inscriptions; Charlotte's *The History of the Year* (1829) – her famous journal-style recollection of when 'papa brought Branwell some soldiers'[55] – insert her late eldest sister, also named Maria, into the Angrian origin myth. As Charlotte recalls the arrival of the toy army, she begins her *History of the Year* with a geography book lying in front of her, in which: '[Maria] wrote on it[s] Blank leaf papa lent me this Book. The Book is a hundred and twenty years old. [sic.]'[56] Maria had died four years previously, but Charlotte consciously attempts to include her sister within their collaborative Glasstown saga. Lutz states that through past marginalia this geography book became 'a sort of relic of the saintly Maria, containing her handwriting – a remnant of her personality.'[57] The Brontë juvenilia was a family affair, therefore we can comprehend that Charlotte and her surviving siblings felt regret that their elder sisters and mother could not contribute to the juvenilia. To rectify this, the siblings would create their mother's literary involvement from relics such as these, approached with the same reverence as Maria's borrowed geography book. We can also recognise echoes of *Remains* in the

[53] Christine Nelson, *The Brontës: A Family Writes* (London: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2016), p.20.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Charlotte Brontë, *The History of the Year,* 12th March 1829, in *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, (11-12), p.12.
[56] Ibid, p.11.
We can link the importance of the geography books depicted in *Jane Eyre* (1847), as will be explored in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[57] Deborah Lutz, *The Brontë Cabinet: Three Lives in Nine Objects* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015), p.17.

earliest works from the Angrian and Gondalian myth; therefore securing Kirke White's, as well as Maria's, role in the Brontë literary apprenticeship.

While Maria has become famous as the 'unseen' ghost of the parsonage, Frances Rossetti has been immortalised as a traditional Victorian mother. Christina and Frances, particularly, were famously devoted to each other's company. William Michael even dedicated his anthology of Christina's family letters to the memory of his mother: 'to whom (Christina's) own books were constantly dedicated'[58] and would describe them as 'inseparably united in life'.[59] Frances is depicted as a woman of devotion to her religion and her family: the ideal nineteenth-century matriarch. As Gabriele maintains: 'she presents, perfect on every side, | The steadfast woman of the sacred page.'[60] He declares his wife to be the 'living pattern' of morality for their children's 'educating discipline': 'For of each rule she utters with her lips | They see in her the breathing prototype.'[61] The Rossetti children concurred, as Angela Thirlwell illustrates: 'All four children were united in their opinion of Mamma – she was the source of all affection in the home, a woman of steadfastness and intellect.'[62] Frances was known to her husband, her children, and therefore to literary history as the ideal homemaker. So blissful was their childhood under their mother's guidance, the Rossetti children and their father would boast that Frances Rossetti was their mother, William

[58] William Michael Rossetti, *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, p.i.
[59] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters* Vol.2., p.399.
[60] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), pp.87-88.
[61] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* p.88.
[62] Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.45.
I would argue that Frances was not the "only" source of affection for the Rossetti children, as Gabriele was extremely affectionate towards his children. His correspondence with Frances concerning the children, his concern for them could almost be considered hyperbolic. For instance, one letter written when Frances had taken the children away on holiday, only for Dante Gabriel and Christina to suffer from ill health, reads as follows: 'Every word you wrote pierced like a dagger into my heart. My sweetest Gabriel, then, is so ill! My baby Christina suffers with her teeth and has wounded her forehead! Oh my poor children! If the distance were less great, I would come immediately to see my four treasures'. Gabriele Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 29th May 1832 – original letter contained within within *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.116.

Michael especially: 'If you were blessed with an unsurpassably good mother, I can with truth say the same of myself'.[63] With all of his intense affection, Gabriele portrayed his adoration for Frances and reminded her of his 'idolisation […] [of] his sincerest love [which] increases with years'[64], as well as his appreciation of her maternal instincts, notably in his correspondence:

> I needn't ask you to look after the children, because I hold it unnecessary: I know you too well. I doubt whether there lives a better mother than you, and a wife more affectionate and amiable has yet to be seen.[65]

She instructed her children to be equally amiable towards each other. In order to distil sibling rivalry, she taught the Rossetti siblings sportsmanship through childhood pastimes, especially card games.[66] Nevertheless, the Rossetti siblings could not resist making their own mark, each "claiming" a card suit as their own personal emblem, as William Michael explains: 'clubs were thus made the appurtenance of Maria, hearts of Dante, diamonds of Christina, and spades of myself.'[67] They never played for stakes, however, with William Michael recalling Frances' fear of the 'horror of gambling', triggered by the suicide of her brother, Dr. John Polidori.[68] Author of *The Vampyre* (1819), and physician to Lord Byron, John Polidori died under the burden of debt and depression. Nevertheless, through her tortured brother, Frances maintained a connection to the notorious Byron. This degree of separation appealed to her husband, as Gabriele hero-worshipped the Romantic poet. As Chapter Two will discuss, Byron was a strong advocate of the Italian anarchist groups such as the Carbonari, of which Gabriele was a prominent member. Sharing the beliefs which led to Gabriele's exile from his homeland, Byron was 'in love', Andrew McConnell Stott explains, 'with the idea of a

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[63] William Michael Rossetti letter to Walt Whitman, dated 1st January 1885 cited in *With Walt Whitman in Camden* by Horace Traubel (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1906), p.438.
[64] Ibid., p.80.
[65] Gabriele Rossetti in a letter to Frances Rossetti dated 29th May 1832, original missive contained within *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.116.
[66] As William Michael recalls in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.12.
[67] Ibid.
The significance of these card-game identifiers will be discussed further in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[68] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.41.

free Italy.'[69] He supplied funds to Gabriele's Carbonari, supporting what he called 'the very *poetry* of politics'.[70] Thus, the Polidori family through their connection to the man who championed Gabriele and his comrades' cause must have seemed too-good-to-be-true for the exiled orator.

Upon arriving in England, Gabriele found a kindred spirit in his fellow Italian expatriate, Gaetano Polidori. His respect for Gaetano's literary and political experience led him to spend the summer of 1825 almost entirely in the Polidori household.[71] His house being predominantly comprised of his unmarried daughters, Gaetano Polidori began, as Roe explains, to 'long for intelligent male companionship. Gabriele Rossetti came along at just the right moment […] a shared loved of Dante Alighieri made the two men fast friends.'[72] Gabriele's visits quickly developed an ulterior motive: the courting of Frances, '[a]n admirer of Romantic poetry, she was impressed with the story of Gabriele's exile'[73], and the two soon formed a love-match. Frances was exceptionally close to her family, and would remain so throughout her life. We can see the tight-knit support in Frances's relationship with her father which she would seek to emulate with her own children. The inherent romance of Gabriele and Frances's connection did have its limits, however: neither she nor Gabriele would elope like Mary Godwin and Percy Shelley if her father disapproved. Before Gabriele proposed to Frances, he wrote to Gaetano asking for his blessing, he recalls the missive in his *Versified Autobiography*:

> If to the gracious name of friend you please
>
> To add the loving name of son as well
>
> […] be not loth

[69] Andrew McConnell Stott, *The Vampyre Family Passion, Envy, and the Curse of Byron* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2013), p.278.
[70] Byron cited in *The Vampyre Family,* p.278.
[71] Gaetano's experience will be explored further in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[72] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.13.
[73] Ibid.

To give the enclosed into your Frances' hands[74]

His request came with the promise that if Gaetano disapproved of the suit, Gabriele would abandon the proposal entirely. He even included his letter to Frances, which contained his offer of marriage, within the letter to Gaetano, explaining: '[i]f so it haps you disapprove of my suit, | Throw the two letters both into the fire'.[75] Gabriele's anxieties were redundant as Gaetano gladly gave his blessing and the pair were married 8th April 1826. What followed was the nineteenth-century equivalent of a celebrity marriage amongst Anglo-Italian circles, as Frances Thomas states it was 'an anniversary that Christina [as well as her siblings] was to remember all her life […] [t]he most remarkable household in Britain was about to come into being.'[76] While Frances presented a connection to the English Romantics for Gabriele, he posed a potential fulfilment of her greatest desire that 'my husband should be distinguished for intellect and my children too.'[77]

While Gabriele wished for his children to follow in his literary and scholarly footsteps, Frances was determined that her children maintain their own artistic individuality. While the Brontës were strictly co-authors and collaborators, the Rossetti dynamic extended to all manner of publishing roles, which would continue throughout their lives and literary careers: writers, illustrators, editors and even publishers. Gaetano Polidori was in fact the first man to publish the Rossetti children. He acquired a printing press upon his arrival in London[78], and it was this press which was used to publish the earliest works of the Rossetti children, including Christina Rossetti's first ever poem: 'To My Mother on the Anniversary of Her Birth (Presented with Nosegay)', dated 27th April 1842. Dedicated to Frances, this poem wishes

[74] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.86.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Frances Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1995), p.18.
[77] Frances Rossetti cited in *His Family-Letters,* Ed. William Michael Rossetti, Vol.1, p.22.
[78] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.17.

Frances a long life so she may 'long us bless'[79], while the then-eleven-year-old Christina also modestly asks her mother's approval of her poem: 'Mother, accept I pray | My offering.'[80] Christina's tone is that of an amateur poet, but also a daughter hoping to receive her mother's approval. Although Frances was an affectionate mother, she also set a high standard of etiquette and literature. In order to focus her children's talent, Frances created the juvenilia magazine *Hodge-Podge.* Using the teaching methods from her years as a governess, Frances communicated the importance of self-discipline in her children from an early age. Writing was not always a simple diversion but a professional pursuit, and *Hodge-Podge* allowed Frances to maintain her children's juvenilia whilst preparing them mentally for what she hoped would be four full lives dedicated to creative success. Thus, the Rossetti children's efforts in juvenilia became a family affair. Although the courageous escapades of Gabriele inspired his children,[81] it is the maternal side of the Rossetti heritage which shaped their methods. The execution of work has always varied dramatically between the children, displaying their individual inclinations from a very early age. A prime example of these youthful variations can be traced to one of the Rossetti family's first joint "publications", the family magazine. As Andrea Rose explains, 'A family magazine called *Hotchpotch, or Weekly Efforts* had been in existence in the Rossetti home before 1843'[82] and this periodical would come to be considered a precursor to *The Illustrated Scrapbook* family magazine, and even the Pre-Raphaelite *Germ* itself. For instance; the juvenile name of *Hodge-Podge* meaning a 'confused mixture' promotes the multidisciplinary nature of the magazine's contents dependent upon her children's "fancies". Dolores Rosenblum explains: 'like the Brontës in their gifts, or rather, inclinations […] the Rossettis wrote romantic tales and poems, inspired

[79] Christina Rossetti, 'To My Mother on the Anniversary of Her Birth (Presented with Nosegay)' (1842) *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p. 82, l.7.
[80] Ibid, ll.3-4.
[81] As will be explored in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[82] Andrea Rose, Eds. *The Germ: Literary Magazine of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1992), p.vii.

by their reading and spurred on by their grandfather's acquisition of a printing press.'[83] Although the Rossettis did not construct an entirely new mythopoeia, both they and the Brontës share parallels between their chosen themes and motifs, which would define their professional careers. While the Rossetti talents were organic, the refinement of their creative methodology began with *Hodge-Podge,* under Frances' supervision as editor, and Gaetano as printer.

Figure 7. Charlotte Brontë, 'A Portrait of Mrs. Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830)
This portrait is a "revision" of the 'Portrait of Maria Branwell Brontë' by an Unknown Artist [Fig.2.]

Frances' involvement in the Rossetti juvenilia was consistent, whereas Maria Brontë's presence in the Parsonage was forged from her absence. Nevertheless, the fact the siblings knew so little of their mother meant Maria's personality was open to interpretation. As a result, her young authorial children fashioned her into a Romantic heroine. Samantha Ellis argues Elizabeth Gaskell emphasised the loss of this 'little, gentle creature', because it helped her to 'tell the critics who called Charlotte's books coarse and unwomanly that they were wrong'.[84] The sisters, Gaskell argues, purely lacked a feminine model. However, a fourteen-

[83] Dolores Rosenblum, *Christina Rossetti: The Poetry of Endurance* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), p.36.

[84] Aunt Branwell's (1776-1842) maternal approach, having moved permanently to the Haworth Parsonage following the death of Maria, is rarely considered in Brontë criticism. Critics often question the altruism of Aunt Branwell's relocation from her hometown of Penzance to the Parsonage following Maria's death, particularly questioning whether her "spinster" status led her to volunteer to raise the children because she was childless herself, and unlikely to ever conceive due to her age. Winifred Gérin inflicted the greatest damage to Aunt Branwell's reputation in *Anne Brontë* (London: Thomas

year-old Charlotte Brontë herself would also contribute to the Austen-esque image of Maria. Evidently unimpressed with the matronly image of Maria, completed by an unknown artist pre-1812 [Fig.2], Charlotte took matters into her own hands and reimagined her mother as a delicate Regency lady [Fig.7], embellishing the original portrait with feminine trappings, as Alexander and Sellars observe: 'the cap is trimmed in front with bows of blue ribbon and the same blue ribbon denotes the end of the small puff sleeve and the high waistline; elaborate lace collar.'[85] Even Maria's facial features are minimised and feminized as Charlotte creates an "air-brushed" 'companion piece'[86] to the original sketch. Patrick's inscription on the back of the original portrait proves that Charlotte was pleased with her efforts to prettify her mother's memory, and she 'presented' the drawing 'to her dear Aunt'.[87] Consequently, we see Maria's idealised image being used not only to console the children who could not remember her, but to seek approval from their living parental figures. The romanticizing of Maria was not restricted to art, but also literature. Her name was a frequent feature of the earliest submissions to the Angrian narrative, including one of Charlotte's favourite heroines, the Queen of Angria and the Duchess of Zamorna, Mary Henrietta Percy.[88] Intriguingly, when the Brontë Edition of *Remains* was recovered, a previous collector had inserted an, as yet unpublished, untitled poem which depicts Mary's husband, the Duke of Zamorna, watching his wife from a distance:

> Mary ~~I stood~~ thou didst not know that I was nigh
>
> Thou didst not know my gaze was fixed on thee

Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1959), which re-imagines Aunt Branwell as a wicked stepmother figure befitting of Aunt Reed of *Jane Eyre* (1847).

This chapter will not consider Aunt Branwell's potential literary legacy in detail, as the intention is to grant Maria Brontë a renaissance in Brontëana, whose legacy is overshadowed by the – albeit limited – biographical studies of Aunt Branwell. Research of Aunt Branwell is due for further study as a result of Nick Holland's *Aunt Branwell and the Brontë Legacy* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword History, 2018).

[85] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 175.

[86] Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës,* p.175.

[87] Patrick Brontë, dedication written on the reverse of Charlotte Brontë's 'A Portrait of Mrs. Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830) [Fig.7.]

[88] This character is widely referred to as 'Mary', for example in extracts such as *A Peep into a Picture Book* (1834); *Zamorna's Exile* (1836) and *The Return of Zamorna* (1836), in *My Angrian and the Angrians* (1834) she is referred to as 'Maria'.

I stood apart & watched thee gliding by

In all thy calm unconscious majesty[89]

This poem was written during a point in the Angrian narrative during which the Zamornas are separated not because, Alexander summarises, the Duke did not love his wife but 'perversely, to punish her father the Duke of Northangerland, who had become his enemy in the Angrian war.'[90] Although Mary Percy's storylines do not outwardly mimic Kirke White's verse directly, they do romanticise how the relic came to be in their possession.

The motif of the shipwreck would be a source of collaboration throughout the juvenilia and their later novel-writing careers, as each Brontë sibling interpreted the image through their individual heroes. The original character to be associated with shipwreck was the Angrian Mary. In Charlotte's three-part poem, 'Zamorna's Exile' (1836)[91], in which we see Mary being parted from both her father and her mother, the division of the heroine from those she loves most is emphasised by the sea. She awaits the restoration of her family 'out of sight and thought of living men, | Wandering away on the lone ocean's face' (I, ll.3-4). Previously, Mary has sworn 'she'd die' (l.81) to be reunited with her husband, Charlotte implies that fate forces Mary to keep '[h]er word' (l.82) as she pines away from Zamorna's absence. However, her husband's absenteeism is not his fault as he appears to have been caught amidst a sea-storm: 'wandering on its shore with shipwrecks strewn, | You'll feel its solitude' (II, ll.69-70). Zamorna implores Mary's presence to join him in his 'exile' (III, l.11), willing her to feel '[t]he very wind around this vessel sweeping | Will steal unto her pillow whisperingly' (I, ll.83-84). Much like the Brontë children, Zamorna is left solely with 'relics he loved so well' (II, l.63) to bring Mary to his memory. The wreck from which the anthology was salvaged was steeped

[89] Charlotte Brontë, 'Mary thou didst not know that I was nigh…' in the Brontë Edition of *Remains,* M.S. taped to the inside cover.
[90] Alexander, 'Early Ambitions: Charlotte Brontë, Henry Kirke White and Robert Southey', p.26.
The Mary/Zamorna/Northangerland dynamic will be studied in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[91] Charlotte Brontë, 'Zamorna's Exile' (July 1836) in *The Juvenilia of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, Eds.* Frances Beer (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986) pp.247-257.

in literary connotations which fascinated the Romance-intrigued siblings. In Maria's aforementioned letter to Patrick which explains the irony that about the time when Patrick was writing 'Lines Addressed to a Lady on her Birthday' with its 'description of your imaginary shipwreck', Maria 'was reading and feeling the effects of a real one.'[92] This eerie sense of unwanted serendipity is increased further, when we consider Patrick had already written a poem detailing a shipwreck in his 1811 *Cottage Poems,* titled 'Winter Night Meditations':

> But hark! the bleak, loud whistling wind –
>
> Its crushing blast, recalls to mind,
>
> The danger of the troubled deep
>
> Where, with a fierce and thunder sweep,
>
> The winds in wild distraction wave[93]

Furthermore, this pre-existing fictional shipwreck is only made stranger by the presence of Patrick's two protagonists: the unnamed 'blithesome youth' and the 'rural Queen' he falls for, named Maria – although this collection was published one year before Patrick met his future wife of the same name.[94] Moreover, *Remains* itself contains a poem by Kirke White in which he contemplates the mind-set of a man involved in a fictional wreck: 'The Shipwrecked Solitary's Song'[95] The titular marooned sailor must rely on his imagination to keep him sane in his loneliness and reunite him with his absent family:

> And fancy gives me back my wife;
>
> And fancy gives me back my child;
>
> She gives me back my little home,
>
> And all its placid joys. (ll.39-42)

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[92] Maria letter to Patrick dated 18th November 1812, in *A Life in Letters* (270-271), p.270.
[93] Patrick Brontë, 'Winter Night Mediations' in *Cottage Poems* (Halifax: Printed by P.K. Holden, 1811), (43-63) p.54.
[94] Patrick Brontë, 'Winter Night Mediations' in *Cottage Poems*, p.49.
[95] *Remains,* Vol.1 pp.373-375.

Ironically, Kirke White's poetry bore a peculiar similarity to the events his *Remains* came to represent for the Brontë siblings: the retrieval of a loved one through imagination. When we consider the Brontë approach to this relic, we can see why it was 'clearly well-used and of great sentimental value to the Brontë children'[96]. While surviving relics could help fashion an image of Maria's personality for her children, it cannot be ignored that the majority of Maria's possessions were abandoned in the sea. As a result, the concept of a shipwreck became a metaphor for loss in multiple forms: loss of property, loss of memory and loss of loved ones. Emily Brontë utilises this metaphor in *Wuthering Heights,* for instance, when describing the fall of Hindley Earnshaw into drink and depression following the death of his wife: 'When his ship struck, the captain abandoned his post; and the crew, instead of trying to save her, rushed into riot and confusion, leaving no hope for their luckless vessel.'[97] Branwell also utilised the image of the shipwreck to depict the separation of lovers, first physical, then spiritual. In his two-part 'Misery' sequence (1835-36)[98], Branwell depicts 'the trials of Lord Albert, the only survivor of a bloody battle. He is riding back to his castle, where his beloved waits'.[99] This lover is poignantly named Maria.[100] As the trauma of the battlefield sets in, Branwell's heroic Lord Albert desperately grasps the image of Maria 'as the sailor to his ship | Clings with more frenzied power' (Part One, ll.238-239). When Albert learns that Maria has passed away in his absence, he imagines their heavenly divide as a tempestuous ocean:

> Over death's unfathomed sea,
>
> Dark and dread the waves dividing

[96] Nicola Harley, "Lost Unseen Bronte Treasure Recovered for The Nation", *Telegraph.co.uk*, 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/11992225/Lost-unseen-Bronte-treasure-recovered-for-the-nation.html> [accessed 15 August 2016].

[97] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* p.154.

[98] Branwell Brontë, 'Misery I & II' in *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë, Eds.* Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), pp.12-33. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[99] Carolyne Van Der Meer, 'Branwell Brontë's Role in the Creation of Heathcliff' *Brontë Studies,* 42:3 (2017), (211-219), p.215.

[100] Carolyne Van Der Meer's article 'Branwell Brontë's Role in the Creation of Heathcliff' in *Brontë Studies,* 42:3 (2017) (pp.211-219) argues that the name was derived from another loss in the Brontë family: their eldest sister Maria.

Thee from earth and earth from thee! (Part One: ll.282-284)

It was a psychological association that continued throughout the Brontë's writing; the most famous example found in *Villette* in which Charlotte's protagonist Lucy Snowe summons the calm excursion of a cruise to portray the carefree nature of her youth: 'Picture me then idle, basking, plump, and happy, stretched on a cushioned deck, warmed with constant sunshine'[101]. Struggling to come to terms with her loss, Lucy illuminates her readers on the death of her family and those financially supporting her through allegory alone, as if to blatantly explain her grief would prove too distressing, as Siobhan Carroll summarises: '[r]efusing to narrate the specifics of her family's downfall, Lucy turns to metaphor, describing herself as an oceanic voyager waylaid by storm.'[102] Despite efforts to keep the family afloat, symbolised by the family's 'casting with our own hands the tackling out of the ship' (28), the tempest proves too strong and 'the ship was lost, the crew perished.' (29) This is not the sole instance in this novel alone in which this motif is used to embody loss, as 'Lucy's financial ruin' is only the first of the novel's fictitious shipwrecks.[103] At the end of the novel, Lucy is forced to face the unknown fate of her beloved Paul Emanuel, who was last seen by Lucy and the reader departing aboard a ship. Although Charlotte does not state this outright, the implication is that Emanuel will never return. Having lost her lover as well as her family, Lucy comes to associate the visceral image of a shipwreck with the 'destruction of hope'.[104] In their associations with shipwreck and all its connotations, both Maria and Kirke White inadvertently contribute to the collaboration of the Brontë juvenilia.[105]

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[101] Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1992), p.28. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[102] Carroll, '*Villette* and the Nineteenth-Century Board Game', p.41.
[103] Ibid, p.41.
[104] Ibid., p.44.
[105] Kirke White had a particularly strong influence on Charlotte when she was initially aspiring to become a professional writer (circa.1835), most notably when writing to the editor of *Remains* and then Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, asking for his opinion of her verse – as will be explored further in Chapter Three.

Strangely, the first issue of *Hodge-Podge* also contains a poem depicting lovers permanently separated by the horror of a shipwreck. Only this depiction is distinctive of the boy who would become the Pre-Raphaelite 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti'. Although submissions to *Hodge-Podge* are unsigned: 'Death of Paul and Virginia. A Ballad', from Issue One, appears to foreshadow some of Dante Gabriel's most celebrated works, especially 'The Blessed Damozel'.[106] William Michael often defined his brother's early success by the completion of this poem, declaring this accomplished verse as the moment his brother's poetic 'faculty was fully developed'.[107] This poem can be classed as 'juvenilia' as Dante Gabriel began the verse in 1846, and its final version was not published until 1881. Furthermore, William Michael explains this poem was written 'with a view to its insertion in a MS. Family-magazine'[108], although whether this poem was intended for *Hodge-Podge* or its later incarnation, *The Illustrated Scrapbook* – which this chapter will also analyse – is not specified. Nevertheless, we can see precursors to 'The Blessed Damozel' in the ballad of Paul and Virginia. Julia Straub summarises the former poem as being narrated by the eponymous damozel, who – having recently deceased – is depicted '[w]ithin a heavenly environment composed of stars, music, saints and angels', consequently her earthly lover is barred 'both from a reunion and the possibility of communication.'[109] Similarly, the ballad is narrated by the titular 'Paul' as he stands upon a clifftop, yearning for the return of his lover, Virginia:

> I see, I see the ship
>
> Which to my arms returns
>
> My well beloved Virginia;
>
> Oh! how my bosom burns! (ll.1-4)

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[106] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel' in *Poems. A New Edition.* (London: Ellis & White, 1881), pp.3-9. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[107] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.107.

The effect of this poem, and its accompanying painting, upon Dante Gabriel's career will be analysed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Julia Straub, *A Victorian Muse: The Afterlife of Dante's Beatrice in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Continuum, 2009), p.60.

The repetition of 'I see' in the opening line accentuates Paul's eagerness at the concept of being reunited with his beloved; while the image of his 'burning bosom' is characteristic of the hyperbolic Romance young Dante Gabriel was trying to achieve.[110] This sense of eagerness, of ignoring any physical or spiritual boundaries, is one reiterated in 'The Blessed Damozel' as the lover wonders if his lady in the bliss of heaven can possibly wish for a reunion as strongly as he does: 'Strove not her steps to reach my side | Down all the echoing stair?' (ll.65-66) Even with Virginia's ship on the visible horizon, '[d]istant eight miles or more' (l.14), Paul cannot cope with the distance between them: 'From the wave beaten land | To which he long'd to soar.' (ll.15-16) The emphasis on boundaries is again echoed in 'The Blessed Damozel', where the titular lady describes the veil between heaven and earth as a vast, unconquerable sea: 'It lies in Heaven, across the flood […] Beneath, the tides of day and night […] The void, as low as where this earth' (ll.31-36). Where the Blessed Damozel cannot be reunified with her lover, there is a promise of lovers coming together in the ballad. Unfortunately, tragedy strikes before Paul and Virginia can see each other again: 'The ship had suffer'd wreck | And all his hopes were fled' (ll.25-26) As a result, Paul is forced to 'contemplate the dead' (l.28), much as Dante Gabriel's later artistic depictions of Dante Alighieri upon being divided from his Beloved Beatrice, and the unnamed lover of his Blessed Damozel.

[110] The use of hyperbolic images and phrases in Dante Gabriel's juvenilia will be explored further in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Figure 8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel (with predella)'
(The Lady Lever Art Gallery, c.1875-88)

One distinction between this early verse and Dante Gabriel's later work is the melodramatic ending to the ballad. Unlike Dante and the Damozel's lover, Paul is not forced to live divided from his love; instead deciding to 'join her angel spirit' (l.31) without hesitation 'uttering not a word' (l.29). Paul and Virginia at last have the reunion Paul desired:

> One grave contains them both;
>
> And o'er their relics rise
>
> Two palm trees closely join'd
>
> And tending tow'rds the skies (ll.33-36)

Dante Gabriel appears to echo the image of the conjoined tree in 'The Blessed Damozel', where the Damozel's lover wishes they could 'lie I' the shadow of | That living mystic tree.' (ll.85-86) His later ekphrastic painting for this poem [Fig.8.] even includes the lover looking up at the Damozel from underneath the shadow of a tangled tree. We are not told if Virginia shares her lover's desires, or given her perspective of events as she, much like Dante

Gabriel's Pre-Raphaelite muses and stunners, is defined as her 'status as muse […] bound up with the ideology'.[111] She, like the aforementioned Damozel and Beatrice, is of more "use" to her writer in death than life. As Straub describes the heaven-contained Damozel: 'the beloved has taken her place which keeps her out of her lover's reach'.[112] Subsequently, we can see Dante Gabriel was already preoccupied with the nineteenth-century fixation Serena Trowbridge observes of making death 'an aesthetic category'.[113] Thus we see early signifiers of Dante Gabriel's professional persona in his family juvenilia. Frances was a proponent of high standards in all aspects of her children's education, but especially their literary apprenticeship. Consequently, in the same year *Hodge-Podge* began, Dante Gabriel was being encouraged to begin his artistic career at the Royal Academy.[114] In August 1843, Dante Gabriel wrote to Frances: 'I am now engaged on a finished drawing of the Antinous, which, supposing it to prove good enough, I may perhaps send in to the Academy. The next opportunity for so doing will be at Christmas, when I may probably try.'[115] While the Rossettis were contributing to a family magazine for enjoyment, Frances was also preparing her children for the professional publishing world, to the extent that Dante Gabriel felt 'sure of success' in his Academy application.[116] Family pastimes synchronised with professional beginnings, and Dante Gabriel was not the only Rossetti sibling to forge part of his public self within this magazine. As previously stated, the title *Hodge-Podge,* a nominal reimagining of

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[111] Alison Chapman, *The Afterlife of Christina Rossetti* (New York: Macmillan, 2000), p.38.
Dante Gabriel's treatment of his muses will be explored in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis.

[112] Julia Straub, *A Victorian Muse: The Afterlife of Dante's Beatrice in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Continuum, 2009), p.60.

[113] Serena Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.28.

[114] As Frances Rossetti had enrolled Dante Gabriel in Henry Sass's Drawing Academy, the alma mater of many child prodigies including John Everett Millais who consequently secured a place at the Royal Academy, therefore it was assume by the Rossetti's that Dante Gabriel would follow suit.
For Further Reading please refer to: William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters.* Vol.1., p.88 and Dinah Roe, 'Pre-Raphaelites In The City: Sass's Drawing Academy: A Pre-Raphaelite
Prep School', *Dinahroe.Com*, 2016
<http://www.dinahroe.com/blog/sasss_drawing_academy_a_pre_raphaelite_prep_school> [accessed 28 October 2016].

[115] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti dated 14th August 1843, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2., p.16.

[116] Ibid.

"hotch-potch", surmised the family periodical's polymathic approach with the accumulation of essays, poetry and short stories. The journal was a literary concoction which contained precursors to foundational Pre-Raphaelite pieces. However, critics are yet to consider that *Hodge-Podge* itself is a forerunner of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's Magazine: *The Germ.* Although this periodical only ran for four issues in 1850[117], it was created to aid the establishment of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's reputation amongst artistic and literary circles. William Michael prefaced each issue stating its intentions to share 'original Tales (in prose or verse), Poems, Essays, and the like […] in the spirit, or with the intent, of exhibiting a pure and unaffected style'.[118] The magazine reflected the Pre-Raphaelite intent to portray truth in art. 'Ask', William Michael's opening sonnet of each issue implores, '"Is this truth?" For is it still to tell'.[119] Although now a self-made editor and critic, William Michael still sought approval from his once-editor, Frances. As Thirlwell maintains, '[e]ven as a self-conscious young man he showed her his poems, glowing in her response to his important if torturous sonnet in 1849 for the front cover of the *Germ.* [sic.]'[120] William Michael engaged with Frances's influence in the early days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and her editorial decisions echo in his own.

Hodge-Podge, despite being an amateur, family magazine, was treated as a professional journal. Although its title emphasises the age of its contributors, it is the alternative title of *Weekly Efforts* which entreats to the potential professional writer in each of them. This subtle but effective strapline reiterates in a simultaneously editorial and maternal manner

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[117] *The Germ* was a monthly publication which ran during January, February, March and April in 1850.
[118] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature, and Art.* (London: Aylott & Jones, 1850) p.2. C.59, c.19, The British Library.
[119] Ibid, p.1.
[120] Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis,* pp.48-49.
When discussing the poem, William Michael appears to particularly enjoys calling Frances's attention to his work ethic, explaining it had once been the intention of the Brotherhood to 'write a sonnet each', explaining their approach to the art movement except, William Michael enthuses, 'mine is the only one done yet'. William Michael Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 28th September 1849 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p.9.

that the children have a deadline which they are expected to, yet did not always, meet. Echoing the structure of publications such as the *Lady's Magazine* and *Blackwood's, Hodge-Podge's* issues feature a two column construction as well as the impeccably ruled lines denoting headers, subheadings and footers, suggests a newspaper format. The issue number was written at the top left hand corner, where the date is adjacent along the same line. A logo in elegant script reads 'RF' in the centre of the heading, presumably an abbreviation for 'Rossetti Family', signifying this magazine as a familial enterprise.

Hodge-Podge; or Weekly Efforts

No.1. R.F. May 20th 1843

Intriguingly a similar design would be implemented by William Michael prior to the printing of the inaugural edition of *The Germ.* Insisting that to name the periodical after the Brotherhood itself would only cause confusion due to their lack of fame – William Michael in fact argued the magazine may be mistaken for 'the transactions of a scientific society for anything he knows to the contrary'[121] - William Michael pacified any annoyance amongst his Brothers by stating that 'to have "P.R.B." printed on the cover, not as the title of the work, but by itself as a kind of device or designation'[122] would be sufficient to connect this journal to their artworks, with some members of the Brotherhood already signing their paintings with the initials. Thus, William Michael proposed the following design:

December

No.1. P.R.B. Price 1/-

Note the similarity between this framework and that of Frances's handwritten drafts of *Hodge-Podge* – excluding the price as the family magazine was intended for private circulation. Whether this similarity was subconscious or not, *The Germ* does parallel

[121] William Michael Rossetti letter to Frederic George Stephens, dated 27th September 1849 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* (5-6), p.5.
[122] Ibid., p.6.

Frances's chosen style. Consequently, writing was not always a simple diversion but a professional pursuit, and *Hodge-Podge* allowed Frances to maintain her children's juvenilia whilst preparing them mentally for what she hoped would be four full lives dedicated to creative success. As evidenced by Dante Gabriel and William Michael's reluctance to relinquish the themes and structure of their *Hodge-Podge* submissions, this collaborative juvenilia helped shape the brothers' Pre-Raphaelite "selves". However, it is this reluctance to fully relinquish the mother's influence, for both the Brontës and Rossettis, which this thesis will explore.

Muse in a Pinafore: Clutching the Literary Apron-Strings

Once a relic or motif is bound to a particular person or time, the temptation is to return to these *aides-mémoires* in later life in order to emulate a former creative environment. Through association to a family member no longer present – through either death or through one's own absence from home – the relic becomes a portal through which they can channel the artistic contribution of a former collaborator or mentor. When we examine Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, for instance, the novel mimics this Brontëan methodology of using texts to summon the memory of someone lost. Cathy's ghost appears at the start of the novel once Lockwood disturbs her childhood room. Upon entering Cathy's box-bed, Lockwood peruses the graffiti and old exercise books on the windowsill, including the marginalia scattered throughout her select library (15). Within one book, Cathy's doodles poignantly mimic those - 'detached sentences' (15) written in an 'unformed, childish hand' (15) - in the margins of *Remains*. The annotations of Emily's heroine increasingly echo those within the Kirke White anthology; her 'faded hieroglyphics' (15) comparable to the shorthand on the back page of the edition [Fig.9.] and a scribbled portrait of the servant Joseph akin to the sketches of Glasstown denizens: 'At the top of an extra page (quite a treasure, probably, when first lighted on) I was greatly amused to behold an excellent caricature […] rudely, yet powerfully sketched' (15). As the relics revived Maria's memory, Catherine's presence is

temporarily resurrected to the extent that the supposedly intangible ghost can break through the glass of her bedroom window and seize Lockwood, pleading 'Let me in!' (20) It is the books which grant Catherine her power to return and Lockwood desperately attempts to block her entrance by 'hurriedly [piling] the books up in a pyramid' against the broken pane (20). However, the ghost grows more articulate and self-aware, stating she has 'been a waif for twenty years' – when she had previously believed she was simply 'lost […] on the moor' – and continues to 'thrust forward' the pile of books (20). The longer she lingers amongst her old books, the stronger her manifestation becomes.[123] Catherine wishes to re-enter the Heights through her library just as the Brontë siblings hoped to admit Maria's presence in the Parsonage through her own collection.

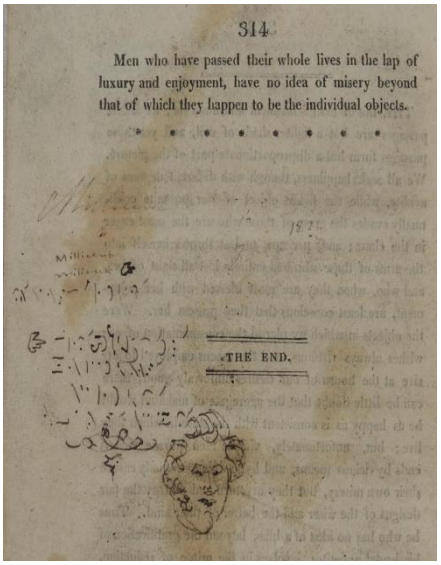

Figure 9. Final Page of the Brontë Edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1810) [Date of Sketch Unknown]
Figure 10. Charlotte Brontë, 'Arthur Wellesley, Marquis of Douro' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1834)

[123] In my essay 'Reinventing Heaven: The impact of the Brontë edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* upon the ghosts of *Wuthering Heights*', pp.132-174 in *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts* (Keighley: The Brontë Society, 2018), I discuss the intriguing aspect of the ghost's name. The spectre declares herself 'Catherine Linton' and Lockwood wonders: 'Why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton.' (*Wuthering Heights,* p.20) This is an intriguing authorial choice when we consider how Maria's children knew of her as "the late Mrs. Brontë", yet many of her relics are attributed to "Maria Branwell". This amalgamation of Catherine's pre and post marital names can be considered another literary parallel between Catherine's exercise books and Kirke White's *Remains*: Lockwood reads the marginalia of a Miss Earnshaw but is visited by the ghost of Mrs. Linton, just as Maria's children used the relics of her "spinster" life to create a less one-dimensional image of Maria as a wife and mother.

Although the marginalia of *Remains* calls to mind the scribblings of *Wuthering Heights's* heroine, when perusing the Brontë Edition there is one scribbled-upon poem that immediately catches the eye: a supernatural tale named 'Gondoline'.[124] This striking aspect is not solely due to the scribblemania, nor the etymological resonance of this title within Emily and Anne's juvenile kingdom of 'Gondal', but also the intriguing parallels between Kirke White's poem and the story of '*Wuthering Heights* in the making'[125]: the tale of Gondal's Queen Geraldine. The eponymous heroine Gondoline's beauty is highlighted by the moon yet again: 'The night it was still, and the moon it shone, | Serenely on the sea' (ll.1-2). The light illuminates that she is a 'maiden full fair to the sight' (l.6) whose 'love had made bleak the rose on her cheek, | And turn'd it to deadly white' (ll.7-8). Her tragic love story begins as she paces along a cliff's edge – a fine border between the security of earth and the chance of death as she 'wander'd o'er the lonely shore' (l.33). Impatiently she looks out across the sea waiting for her lover, Bertrand, to return. She describes her paramour in heroic terms, as 'the bravest youth | Of all our good king's men' (ll.13-14). A respected warrior in the Crusades, he too pauses 'on the well contested field |[where] Full fifteen thousand lay' (l.227-228) reflecting on his love for Gondoline – much like Branwell's Northangerland. Gondoline appears to have subjected herself to a form of exile as she waits for Bertrand within a 'horrible rift' (l.41) where lies a 'cavern yawning wide' (l.44), the dark divide echoing the purgatorial existence of anticipating a reunion which dominates Brontëan works. However, her story fluctuates between traditional Romance and the Gothic as she is lulled from her self-imposed banishment within nature by an unknown, magnetic force – in the same stanza which the Gondoline Portrait illustrates – and happens upon a coven of witches: 'Her foot it slipp'd, and she stood aghast […] Yet, still upheld by the scene and charm, | She kept upon her road.' (ll.57-60) Evidently, this supernatural aspect captivated the Brontë siblings while they perused their mother's copy of *Remains*, since a fascinating piece of

[124] Kirke White, *Remains* Vol.2., pp.30-43. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[125] Fannie Ratchford, *Gondal's Queen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955), p.27.

marginalia is sketched beside these lines.[126] The sketch is distinctly Angrian with the head and décolletage of this mysterious character strongly indicative of Charlotte's drawing style. The wide, round eyes, long nose, highly arched eyebrows and sideways stare are markedly resonant of Charlotte's 1834 sketch of the chivalric Marquis of Douro – possibly inspired by the description of Bertrand's valour.[127] [Fig.10] Although the portrait that lies within the margins of 'Gondoline' bears an Angrian quality, Gondoline's tale foreshadows key plotlines in the life of Emily and Anne's 'female alternative to Byronic heroes'[128]: Augusta [Geraldine?][129] Almeda, also known as 'A.G.A.'[130].

A.G.A., like Kirke White's heroines Mary and Gondoline, is closely associated with the presence of the moon to the extent that the celestial body itself seems to summon the heroine, whether in person or in memory; a method frequently manipulated by her lover

[126] I am unable to obtain a copy of this image due to copyright. To view the marginalia, please refer to my essay 'Reinventing Heaven: The impact of the Brontë edition of *The Remains of Henry Kirke White* upon the ghosts of *Wuthering Heights*', pp.132-174 in *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts* (Keighley: The Brontë Society, 2018), p.146.

[127] The strong parallels between these two images do not preclude one of Charlotte's siblings from being the artist, however the resemblance is arguably the most striking of the Glasstown sketches.

[128] Christine Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xxxvii.

[129] Although Emily Brontë's surviving manuscripts do not explicitly state that 'Geraldine' and 'A.G.A.' are the same character, it is a common assumption amongst critics that the 'G' in 'A.G.A.' stands for 'Geraldine'. For instance, Fannie Ratchford's study *Gondal's Queen: A Novel in Verse by Emily Jane Brontë* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955) and Janet's Gezari's *Emily Jane Brontë: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1992) argue that these characters are the same person. Gezari, for instance, maintains:

> Geraldine is Julius's lover and almost certainly his wife; in 'Geraldine', we learn that they have a child. At the same time, 'The Death of A.G.A.', presents A.G.A. as Julius's lover and probably his wife. Both A.G.A. and G.S. have black hair and eyes. (p.xxxi)

I argue that Emily's poem 'A.S. to G.S' (1841) – 'A.S'. both Ratchford and Gezari argue refers to A.G.A.'s stepdaughter Angelica Sidonia (Ratchford, p.44 and Gezari, p.268) – further verifies that 'G' of 'A.G.A.' stands for 'Geradline', as in this poem Angelica refers to her half/step-brother, Gerald, following the death of A.G.A.: 'Our Mother needs no tears […] Remember still she is not dead | She sees us Gerald now.' (*Complete,* (137-138) p.137, ll.2, ll.13-14). Hence we can argue Gerald was named after his mother.

In adopting this argument, we can perceive another etymological echo between Gondoline and 'Geraldine', or 'A.G.A.' of Gondal. This basic resemblance is strengthened only by how 'Geraldine's' storyline mimics key moments in Gondoline's. For the sake of exploring every parallel between Brontë's heroine(s) and Kirke White's, this analysis will henceforth accept that these characters are consubstantial.

[130] This chapter will hereafter refer to this character by the cognomen 'A.G.A.' to avoid confusion.

Julius: 'Geraldine, the moon is shining'.[131] However, in the many poems where she wishes for Julius's homecoming, the moon serves to highlight how her beauty, much like Gondoline, has diminished somewhat by pining: 'thick did raven ringlets veil | Her forehead, drooped like lily pale.'[132] Where 'Gondoline' disconnects from society to pace 'at the foot of the rifted rock' (l.3), a precarious border between the security of earth and the chance of death as she 'wander[s] o'er the lonely shore' (l.33), A.G.A. is also seen 'lonely in her distant cave' ('Geraldine' l.5) beside 'the river's restless wave' (l.6.). In the Brontë's maternal copy of Kirke White's literary work and in their own writing, watery images are invoked to increase the sense of unjust separation. Juliet Barker describes the 'archetypal' Gondalian poem as exhibiting the 'usual longings of exiled characters who have been torn from their families'[133], correspondingly both Gondoline and A.G.A. occupy a separate sphere, beyond reality.[134] Physical division in both storylines symbolises a state of being between truth and Fancy, as Regina Barreca argues, for Brontë the 'ex' in 'exile' or 'excommunication' 'indicates the idea of formerly belonging to the standing order, but now reimaging out of or above the boundaries of that order.'[135]

The challenging of patriarchal order and gender boundaries was a principal Frances Rossetti sought to instil in her own daughters, albeit in a much more modest approach. She believed intellect could make a woman equal to a man and argued that women did not have to forfeit their education to be considered ideally "feminine". It was a proto-feminist belief instilled early in all of Gaetano and Anna Maria Polidori's daughters. The daughters of a once self-sustained governess, Frances and her sisters Charlotte, Maria Margaret (known as Margaret)

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[131] 'Song by Julius Brenzaida', *Complete,* (79-80), l.1.
[132] 'Geraldine' (1841), *Complete,* (133-134), ll.11-12.
[133] Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.402.
[134] While Gondoline's exile seems self-induced, many, like Ratchford, believe A.G.A. was forced to flee the precarious politics of the kingdom due to her affiliation with Julius. (Ratchford, *Gondal's Queen,* pp.120-121) Alexander disputes this reading, stating the 'Geraldine' character 'no longer supports (Julius) politically, so her leaves her.' (Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown,* p.614)
[135] Regina Barreca, *Sex and Death in Victorian Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.228.

and Eliza were raised with a view to earning their own income through the teaching profession. Much like the Brontë sisters, as Chapter Three will discuss, their earliest education prepared them for their futures as governesses. Frances would be the only Polidori sister to marry and have children. As a result, the "Polidori Aunts" would be a constant fixture of the Rossetti children's lives. Aunt Margaret, Jan Marsh explains, was particularly dedicated to her nieces and nephews, ending her governess career to become the 'most present of all the aunts.'[136] They were a tight-knit sisterhood, even after Frances left her father's home to set-up her own. While Maria and Christina's mother was deemed the pinnacle of "traditional" womanhood, the Poldori aunts provided the Rossetti sisters with, Arseneau believes, 'a living example of lifelong spinsterhood. Despite the Victorian rhetoric assuring woman of 'the dismal emptiness of such a fate'[137], the example of their aunts must have been of comfort to Maria and Christina as they grew older, committing themselves entirely to their chosen vocations rather than marriage.[138] These women advocated following one's passion over adhering to patriarchal expectations, especially Aunt Eliza. Although she spent much of her life as a nursemaid for her ailing mother[139] in 1854, the year following Anna Maria's death, Eliza was determined – her nephew William Michael describes: 'to make her knowledge of nursing useful to the nation, and went out with Miss Nightingale to the Crimean expedition, being then about forty-five years of age.'[140] Consequently, although '[t]o her disappointment no actual nursing was assigned to her, but she had the supervision of the hired nurses, and the management of bedding-stores etc.'[141], Eliza Polidori found herself within an extensive sisterhood which eventually would forge an alternative perception of nineteenth-century femininity. As Martha Vicinus observes: '[i]n a society that fostered weak egos in women and encouraged them to remain childlike and

[136] Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p.18.
[137] Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics*, p.23.
[138] As will be discussed further in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[139] Much like the role Christina fulfilled for her father as his eyesight began to falter, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.
[140] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.32.
[141] Ibid.

dependent, those rare individuals who broke away from the female stereotype possessed enormous vitality and self-confidence.'[142] These nurses were at the forefront of autonomous female groups, which threatened the patriarchal structure, seemingly as subversive as the Anglican Sisterhood which Maria Rossetti would later join.[143]

Although the 'Crimean affair', as William Michael would christen the excursion, would be the 'only "adventure"' of Eliza's long life, she became defined by the independence this role embodied.[144] When she returned to England, she was summoned to a London police-court to give evidence of 'some case relating to the nursing transactions'; William Michael recalls how he and his family were 'amused' when the newspapers mistakenly reported her name as 'Miss Polly Dory'.[145] Christina was particularly inspired by her brave aunt, volunteering to join the nurses, but turned down due to her young age.[146] Her pride for her aunt never dwindled, as in 1883 she and her mother received a letter from family friend and Pre-Raphaelite, Ford Madox Brown who, it would appear, had a friend who was collecting private recollections from those who worked with Florence Nightingale. Eliza, being a private woman, was unwilling to share anecdotes: 'My Aunt Eliza adds her compliments,' Christina's reply reads, 'I wish her personal reminiscences of Mrs. Nightingale could have been available for your friend, but must hope that he has plenty of material at command.'[147] Nevertheless, as Arseneau observes, the 'constellation of single women' the Polidori sisters exemplified constituted 'a remarkable community; a circle of educated, religiously committed, and active women who must have provided important exemplars for Rossetti.'[148] Thus female endurance, intelligence and independence were virtues Frances sought to encourage in

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[142] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.19.
[143] Please refer to Chapter Three of this thesis for further details.
[144] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.32.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti*, p.23.
[147] Christina Rossetti letter to Ford Madox Brown, c. Autumn 1883 in 'Miscellaneous papers, 1816-1957', Facs.18-19. (Bodelian Library, Oxford) [Original MS. from University of British Columbia]
[148] Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti*, p.23.

Maria and Christina. We see evidence of these principles in *Hodge-Podge.* Although submissions to this family magazine never specified which Rossetti authored individual pieces, making it difficult to distinguish which articles were completed by Maria and Christina, evidence of Frances' own pedagogical voice pervades the family enterprise. Her own submissions, Roe summarises, concern 'religious topics, instructional essays and mottoes'.[149] Her writings extol "expected" feminine merits such as piety and obedience to one's elders, whilst simultaneously imploring the importance of individual talents. *Hodge-Podge* represents not only the early stages of Dante Gabriel and William Michael's Pre-Raphaelite "selves", but also the search for strong feminine roles which would define Maria and Christina's professional voices.

Nevertheless, Frances did not only encourage her children to find strong proto-feminist models in their own family, but throughout history. In Issue One of *Hodge-Podge,* for instance, there is one piece clearly written by Frances titled 'Letter' which accentuates the cultural significance of Joan of Arc as 'probably the most extra-ordinary female character ever recorded in history.'[150] The missive begins '[m]y dearest Daughter' and, although Frances does not specify if her work is directed towards Maria or Christina, she explains that the daughter in question is 'desirous to know my opinion of Joan d'Arc'. It is highly likely that this piece was intended for Maria, as during the early 1840s Maria was particularly fascinated with strong – often martyred – women of history. She was especially engrossed by their sense of legacy and their relationship with the divine.[151] Equally, Frances's 'Letter' contemplates the validity of Joan of Arc's connection to God: 'I think it must ever remain a

[149] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.58.
[150] Frances Rossetti, 'Letter' in *Hodge-Podge*, Issue One, dated 20th May 1843, MS. Facs. c.95 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.2. All references to 'Letter' refer to this facsimile.
[151] For instance, Maria would complete an original poem 'Daughter of Jairus' for her Aunt Charlotte's ailing pupil, Lady Isabella Howard. This poem contemplates the Biblical tale, depicted in Luke 8, where Jairus's daughter dies, but is restored by Christ. Unfortunately, copies of Maria's 'Daughter of Jairus', are not available to the public. She also completed a poem dedicated to Christian philanthropist Gwendoline Talbot, as shall be discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

problem whether or not she was supernaturally inspired, though without allowing her to have been so, it is almost impossible to account for her deeds'. The insinuation is that, whether Joan of Arc's heavenly visions were formed by God or her own mind, her heroism speaks for itself. She believed she was completing God's work, regardless of direct divine instruction. It was this belief in a higher cause which appealed to the teenage Maria. As Roe observes – while Dante Gabriel was composing Quixotic tales of "masculine" achievements, as Chapter Two will explore – Maria was more concerned with 'heroism of a quieter, specifically feminine kind, which derives its strength from qualities of endurance, faith, community and service.'[152] The fact 'Daughter of Jairus' was composed for her aunt's sickly student is a testament to the Sisterhood which was already forming between the Rossetti women and a wider female community, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Solidarity amongst women was being instilled in Maria and Christina. Frances's letter advocates proto-feminist "rebellion", in so far as she believes women should not be silenced, or we would not have heroines such as Joan of Arc: '[h]er purity, her undaunted bearing, her disinterested patriotism were calculated to elicit the highest admiration.' Her letter concludes by decrying the 'Duke of Bedford' – commander of the British army during the Hundred Years War – for forcing Joan to suffer 'the ignominious death of a witch', a constant 'blot' on an otherwise heroic legacy. Frances wanted to show her daughters the strength of the feminine voice, whilst ensuring they always spoke with honourable, and supposedly "feminine", intentions, such as the word of God and female endurance. Her mentality would shape the personal and professional dynamics of her daughters.

In contrast, Emily and Anne Brontë found their martyred heroine in their own creation: A.G.A., who finds communication with the divine in the form of Nature. A.G.A. crosses the boundary of the rigidity of the kingdom deep into nature as she lingers in 'a cavern wild'

[152] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.56.

('Geraldine' l.17), 'melancholically self-exiled'[153] and 'lonely in her distant cave' (l.5). She is both physically and emotionally disconnected from her former life, as Anne romantically explores in her earliest surviving Gondal manuscript: 'Verses by Lady Geralda' (1836).[154] While Emily depicts A.G.A. seeking refuge in nature, Anne's poem depicts the heroine 'estranged from the natural world'[155] as she wanders '[u]pon the pathless moor | To hear the wild wind rushing by' (ll.6-7). Nick Holland observes that 'while Gondal was ostensibly a Pacific paradise, its landscape greatly resembled that which Anne and Emily love to explore'.[156] However the scene which grants the authoresses comfort turns against the narrator as the one time 'music' (l.9) of the 'lofty voice' of the wind (l.10) suddenly 'takes another tone | And howls along the barren ground' (ll.14-15). A.G.A. has unwittingly alienated herself from the natural world as a result of her impending exile: 'I leave thee then my childhood's home' (l.93). Where Emily's depiction of A.G.A.'s banishment is reminiscent of Kirke White's 'Gondoline', Anne's more closely resembles his work 'To an Early Primrose'[157]. Where 'To an Early Primrose' depicts the narrator in a 'low vale […] openest to the ripping gale' (ll.10-11), A.G.A. find herself within a 'lovely vale […] [to hear] the sighing of a gale' (ll.22-24) while within these bracing landscapes they stumble across a primrose, a symbol of hope and first youth.[158] A.G.A. recalls the death of her mother (l.74) as well as other family letters as she observes the primrose beds. Themes of isolation, separation and the desire for the return of a loved one are paralleled yet again as the heroine contemplates how a delicate flower such as the primrose manages to grow amongst the tempestuous moors: 'loaded with the pleasant scent | Of wild and lovely flowers' (ll.29-30); equally Kirke

[153] Steve Vine, 'Romantic Ghosts: The Refusal of Mourning in Emily Brontë's Poetry', *Victorian Poetry,* Vol.37, No.1. (1999), (99-107), p.99.

[154] Anne Brontë, 'Verses by Lady Geralda' (December 1836) in *Tales of Glasstown,* Ed. Christine Alexander, pp.441-444. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
Christine Alexander states 'The Gondal speaker [of 'Verses by Lady Geralda'] appears only in this poem, though the similarity of her name to Emily's character 'Geraldine' suggests they may be related.' *Tales of Glasstown,* p.591.

[155] Ellis, *Take Courage,* p.82.

[156] Nick Holland, *In Search of Anne Brontë* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016), p.53.

[157] *Remains,* p.52. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[158] Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), p.188.

White speculates how this 'modest form, so delicately fine, | Was nursed in whirling storms' (ll.2-3). The primrose becomes a metaphor for inner and outer beauty which prevails in spite of harsh climates, or as Kirke White describes: 'virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms' (l.13). A.G.A. utilises the image of the self-plucked primrose, which she leaves '[t]o die and wither there' (l.54) as a metaphor for her self-willed exile and how the removal from her native home may result in A.G.A. losing her "bloom". Although Anne engrosses herself in this sense of loss for a much more prolonged period than Kirke White's short poem – it is characteristic of Anne, Holland maintains, to completely immerse herself in 'the Gondalian characters, imagining how she would feel if in their shoes'[159] – both Kirke White and Brontë's protagonists come to utilise the image of the enduring primrose as an emblem of courage. Fascinatingly, Patrick Brontë also used this flower as a motif of feminine fortitude in his 1813 poem 'Lines Addressed to a Lady on her Birthday', dedicated to Anne's mother. Patrick places Maria in the safety of the outdoors as Nature itself seems to bend to mimic her virtue:

> The primrose pale,
> Perfumes the gale,
> The modest daisy, and the violet blue,
> Inviting, spread their charms for you.[160]

It is intriguing that Anne appears to emulate a poem contained in Maria's book, as well as a verse Patrick dedicated to her – possibly the poem Patrick was writing when *Remains* was almost lost to the shipwreck – in her use of the youthful primrose. Arguably, this flower came to emulate both the femininity of her mother and the safety of motherland, both of which Lady Geralda fears she is losing.

A.G.A. 'plucks' the primrose to symbolise her removal from home – this poem having been completed prior to Anne's leaving the Parsonage to attend Roe Head School implying that art

[159] Holland, *Life of Anne Brontë*, p.53.
[160] Patrick Brontë, *The Rural Minstrel: A Miscellany of Descriptive Poems* (Halifax: Printed by P.K. Holden, 1813), (43-53), p.47.

is imitating life here[161] - and, like the flower, she fears she will 'die and wither' (l.54) when pulled from her native home: 'when I found it dead today | Why did I shed a tear?'(ll.55-56) Both Emily and Anne depict A.G.A. as finding Earth 'such an alien home' ('Geraldine' l.27) following her banishment, a pre-cursor to Catherine Earnshaw's dream in which she imagines herself in Paradise, yet 'heaven did not seem to be my home.'[162] The yearning to return to one's beloved is typical of Kirke White's poetry; undoubtedly this reaction was poignant to the motherless Brontës inspecting Maria's relic. In 'Verses by Lady Geralda', the beloved in question is her childhood home. By the conclusion the heroine has processed her fears of oncoming homesickness and, although she has not completely overcome them, determines 'nought can charm my weary heart | Except activity.' (ll.99-100) She resolves to immerse herself in the next chapter of her life. Equally, Kirke White says of the primrose that 'every bleaching breeze […] [c]hastens her spotless purity' (ll.17-18), just as A.G.A. also bears 'a cherished hope | To cheer me on my way' (ll.85-86) as she departs her home. Unlike Charlotte and Branwell's Mary Percy, Kirke White's as well as Emily and Anne's heroines embody endurance. The primrose flower would continue to personify endurance for Anne Brontë, as in *Agnes Grey,* the titular governess contemplates with her romantic interest, Mr. Weston, how the primrose reminds her of those in the valleys surrounding her home. In her nostalgia, Weston reminds her: 'It must be a great consolation to you to have a home […] however remote, or however seldom visited, still it is something to look to.'[163] Weston reminds the displaced governess to be grateful for what she has, asserting that she can weather separation, using similar language to Kirke White's storm-battered primrose: '[e]very blow that shakes it [the human heart] will serve to harden it against a future stroke'.[164] Much like Lady Geralda's verse, Weston implores her to look towards her future: 'You don't know what happiness lies before you yet […] you are now only in the

[161] Please refer to Chapter Three of this thesis for further details of Anne's homesickness.
[162] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* p.66.
[163] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey,* p.373.
[164] Ibid.

commencement of your journey.'[165] Weston then presents her with her favourite flower, the primrose, which she then keeps between the pages of her Bible: 'I have them still, and mean to keep them always.'[166] Subsequently, both primrose and shipwreck were connected with the loss of home and also survival. Consider Lucy Snowe's continuation after the deaths of her immediate family and M. Emmanuel, the Greys' reassessment of their livelihoods, and Hindley's refusal to continue '[w]hen his ship struck'[167]; the shipwreck metaphor contemplates both how life is lost, and how life continues. Hence, through the primrose, Anne mimics both *Remains* and her father's own poetry concerning Maria, to show how a legacy can continue after a dramatic loss

The endurance of femininity, combined with an inherent source of strength, was a stance Frances Rossetti emphasised with her own daughters. Frances taught her daughters to be devout and creative, and her submissions to the magazine shared amongst the family emphasise her parental and editorial methods. Gabriele particularly encouraged his daughters to emulate the example she set, especially in regards to Frances's dedication to their accomplishments and their piety:

> My loving girls, in whom my soul describes
>
> A heavenly mind in virgin modesty
>
> […] You from a double looking glass it seems,
>
> Reflect upon us all your mother's soul'[168]

Although *Hodge-Podge*'s pieces are unsigned, there is one piece titled 'Hymn for Ascension Day', which commences Issue Two [dated 27th May 1843], which is a testament to her teachings. As the title states, the poem is intended for the Feast Day of the Ascension, which celebrates the moment Jesus transcends Earth to sit at God's right hand, forty days after the

[165] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey,* p.373.
[166] Ibid.
[167] *Wuthering Heights,* p.154.
[168] Gabriele Rossetti, *A Versified Autobiography* (Bodleian Library), p.81.

resurrection.[169] The *Hodge-Podge* hymn begins with religious zeal, declaring: 'Hail to the Saviour, God of heav'n and earth!' (l.1) However, as the verse continues, it offsets the ascension of Jesus with the promise that Jesus will return in the Second Coming: 'An age to come, an unborn race shall see […] In semblance like descend with seraph band, | And raise the dead to life from sea and land.' (ll.17-20) The author of the poem revels in their staunch Christian devotion, declaring their place in the afterlife almost guaranteed: 'They who in life with joy embrac'd his cross | Shall triumph then; the rest shall suffer loss.' (ll.25-26)

It is unknown whether this was written by Frances or either of her daughters. This could be the work of Frances as in Issue Five of *Hodge-Podge* she "publishes" 'A Morning Hymn for the tune of 'Glory to the Thee my God this night', written during a later period when Frances was the only Rossetti contributing to the journal. Clearly, Frances was adept at writing pious anthems. On the other hand, Maria's piety was the defining characteristic of her life, as William Michael verifies: 'before she was far advanced in girlhood, she settled down into religion, and there she abode for the rest of her life.'[170] As Elizabeth Ludlow observes, her juvenilia and teenage letters demonstrate Maria's 'keen engagement'[171] with religious discourse. One letter of Maria's written only four months after the printing of 'Hymn for Ascension Day', contains her engagement with the Tractarian doctrine she and her mother and sister subscribed to: 'I have read part of Mr. Newman's third volume; I pursued yesterday a sermon 'On a Particular Providence as revealed in the Gospel', which I am sure will please you as much as it does me.'[172] In fact, when Maria was operating as an 'Associate

[169] The Ascension of Jesus is described in Acts 1.

[170] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.18.

[171] Elizabeth Ludlow, *Christina Rossetti and the Bible: Waiting with the Saints* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p.29.

[172] Maria Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated August 1843, Box 3. File.3 (Angeli-Dennis Collection, University of British Columbia).
"Mr. Newman" refers to poet, Anglican priest and later Catholic cardinal, John Henry Newman, a prominent Tractarian. For further information, please refer to Kirstie Blair's, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Sister' for the Anglican Sisterhood of All Saints[173], she wrote to a Bible class she was teaching that Ascension Day was 'one of the greatest Festivals in the whole year'.[174] In these missives, published in 1872 as part of her didactic collection *Lessons to My Bible Class on Thirty-Nine Sundays,* Maria also emphasises the protection God grants those who believe in him: 'all of us to Celebration, all who are confirmed and duly prepared to Communion'. She also accentuates the significance of Christ's omnipotence in Heaven: 'we meditate on that work of love which He does for us, now that He is sitting on the right hand of God.'[175]

Conversely, Christina was also extremely reverent from a young age and could equally be the author. In fact, William Michael's *Some Reminiscences* at times recollects Christina as being even more Godly than her elder sister who would become an Anglican nun, at least in their pre-teens. William Michael argues that Maria, although already religious, was more preoccupied creatively with 'a varied gamut of fancies, from the British seaman to Napoleon, and on to the swift-footed Achilles and Grecian mythology in general. Fancies of this sort were more prominent in her, in mere childhood, than the religious emotions'.[176] In contrast, Christina was already a religious poet – the month prior to the completion of 'Hymn for Ascension Day', twelve-year-old Christina composed a short verse simply titled 'Hymn':

To the God who reigns on high,

To the Eternal Majesty,

To the Blessed Trinity,

Glory on earth be given,

In the sea and in the sky,

[173] Please refer to Chapter Three of this thesis for further details of "rankings" amongst these sisterhoods.
[174] Maria Rossetti, *Letters to my Bible Class on Thirty-Nine Sundays* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1872), p.80.
[175] Ibid.
[176] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1.,p.18.

And in the highest heaven.[177]

Similarly to 'Hymn for Ascension Day', Christina's 'Hymn' emphasises Christ's position at God's right-hand: 'floating in space | Fixing the eyes of all the human race!' ('Ascension Day', ll.23-24) She also presages the *Hodge-Podge* poem's use of the 'sea and sky' imagery to emphasise Christ's dominion over all the earth. Where 'Ascension Day' depicts the Rapture as Jesus 'rais[ing] the dead to life from sea and land' (l.20), 'Hymn' states that divine glory spreads across sea, sky and Heaven itself. These were visions Christina would recall in her 1885 work *Time Flies,* a Christian diary which records the author's thoughts on each individual Saint Day and significant festival in the Anglican calendar. On Ascension Day (30th May), Christina composes an untitled poem, without any commentary or explanation, which poignantly begins:

Parting after parting,

Sore loss and gnawing pain;

Meeting grows half a sorrow,

Because of parting again.[178]

Unfortunately, this poem was conceived after Maria and Frances had already died, hence the memory of Ascension forced Christina to recall the most Christian women in her life, and possibly the *Hodge-Podge* poem. Once again the juxtaposition of land and sea is utilised as Christina seemingly yearns for 'new creation': 'When shall new earth be ours | Without a sea (?)'[179] The restoration of the Earth in the Second Coming symbolises the reunion of living and dead, a reunification Christina must have desired with the deaths of her family members, however it is intriguing that she emulates the concurrence of Ascension and Christ's prophesised return in a similar fashion to the *Hodge-Podge* hymn. As Ludlow notes,

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[177] Christina Rossetti, 'Hymn' (dated 2nd July 1843) *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p. 83. [Entire Poem].

[178] Christina Rossetti, *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895) (102-103), p.102, ll.1-4.

[179] Ibid., p.103, ll.7-8.

Christina's *Time Flies* confronts the '"hollow momentary world" and draws attention upward to the "substantial eternal world" towards which they are heading.'[180] Regardless of who completed this hymn, through our inability to distinguish which Rossetti woman was its author, we see how tight-knit and collaborative the mother and sisters had become in their religious feelings and their art. They were of the same mentality, visible throughout their careers, of believing in one's abilities and of the power of God. It was this self-belief which Frances hoped would carry her daughters to become creative equals of their male counterparts.

Where Frances was encouraging sisterly harmony in Maria and Christina, ironically Emily and Anne Brontë were exploring the theme of familial divide in their Gondal series. The majority of these verses, especially Emily's, 'focus especially on the violent passions of the strong-willed heroine [A.G.A.] and on the power struggle of Julius Brenzaida.'[181] Emperor Julius is fighting in the south country with equal boldness as '[l]oud arose the triumphal hymn'[182] while 'princes hang upon his breath | And nations round are fearing' (ll.13-14). Similarly to Bertrand, Julius yearns for A.G.A. as he envisions 'the wind is whispering only, | Far – across the water borne'[183]. The division of the sea is emphasised yet again as A.G.A. is taunted by 'Fancy' which asks:

> Where may thy lover be?
>
> Is he upon some distant shore?
>
> Or is he on the sea?[184]

The fear of shipwreck recurs as A.G.A. fears she will never see Julius again, and she must rely solely on her own, tenuous imagination. In romantic circumstances, A.G.A. and Julius's story is extremely similar to that of Gondoline and Bertrand, however Kirke White's story becomes

[180] Ludlow, *Christina Rossetti and the Bible*, p.192.
[181] Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown,* p.xxxvi.
[182] 'Song' (1839) *Complete,* (96), l.5.
[183] 'Song by Julius Brenzaida', *Complete,* (79-80), l.5-6.
[184] 'To A.G.A.' (1839) *Complete,* (148-149), ll.13-14.

almost Macbethian with the introduction of the witch coven: 'And round about the cauldron stout | Twelve withered witches stood'. (ll.89-90) Observing their rituals, Gondoline overhears stories spoken by three "Weird Sisters", concerning how they came upon the gruesome ingredients for their brew: 'And now they stopp'd; and each prepared | To tell what she had done' (ll.101-102). Although the similarities between Gondoline and A.G.A. seemingly end with this unholy trinity, each of their stories correlates with crucial events in A.G.A's narrative. One of the most significant echoes is in the deaths of Bertrand and Julius.

Despite their reputations of success on the battlefield, both Julius and Bertrand are imagined with an air of lingering doom. Both women keep watch for their lovers, their hope embodied in both 'Gondoline' and 'To A.G.A.' in the form of a light, which beckons the lost one back from across the sea. Gondoline mimics the female love of the Greek myth of Hero and Leander[185] and 'placed a light | In the high rock's lonely tower | To guide her lover to the land' (ll.25-27). Emily's poetry subverts the gender of the lamp-lighting lover as Julius imagines this "light" in a far more figurative sense: as a metaphor for remaining loyal to one's paramour, as his absence causes doubt to stir within Julius as to whether A.G.A. '(h)ast faithless been' ('To A.G.A.' l.25). Initially, Julius maintains:

> The heart I love, whate'er betide
> Is faithful as the grave
> And neither foreign lands divide
> Nor yet the rolling wave – (ll.18-21)

Although A.G.A. appears to have been loyal, both hers and Julius's licentious reputations causes them to doubt each other, with Julius bitterly renouncing his lover: 'I knew not 'twas

[185] This myth tells of Hero, a priestess, who lived in a tower in Sestos, who fell in love with Leander of Abydos, on the opposite side of the Hellespont. He would swim across the water every night, with Hero lighting a lamp at the top of the tower to guide him. For further reading, please refer to: Silvia Montiglio, *The Myth of Hero and Leander: The History and Reception of an Enduring Greek Legend* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).

so dire a crime | To say the word, Adieu'.[186] It appears Julius has heard that Geraldine has betrayed him in some fashion, believing his absence sufficient to have 'tamed' her love ('Song by J. Brenzaida to G.S' l.13). Consequently, he 'for[gets] her light' ('To A.G.A. l.29), symbolising he has lost hope – and even desire – for reunion. In his heartbreak and anger, Julius joins with 'bosom bound to mine | With links both tried and strong' ('Song by J. Brenzaida to G.S' ll.17-18), referring to the army which fights for him. Julius charges recklessly into battle in the hopes of 'chas(ing) the foolish thoughts away | That mourn your (A.G.A's) memory!' (l.23-24) Unfortunately, Julius's recklessness leads to his defeat and subsequent death.[187] Equally, the longer Bertrand is in the Holy Land, 'for many a rolling year' (l.18), the more Gondoline implores the heavens to 'tell me but if Bertrand live, | And I in peace will die' (ll.31-32). In fact, Gondoline repeats the line 'tell me but if Bertrand live' twice (l.31; l.39) to emphasise her fearful state. Fear for Bertrand causes Gondoline to become paranoid that the 'curlew scream(ing)' (l.34) is an omen for his loss, and she is tormented by paranoia as 'oft she heard, in Fancy's ear, | Her Bertrand's dying sigh' (ll.11-12). It is unknown if Bertrand himself doubts Gondoline as strongly as Julius grows to, however the third witch of the poem 'in a vassal's garb disguised' (l.237) convinces Bertrand his lover has equally ceased to wait for his return:

> That three days ere she had embark'd
> His love had given her hand
> Unto a wealthy Thane – and thought
> Him dead in Holy Land. (ll.241-244)

Consequently, Bertrand allows his 'heart (to) run cold' (l.248) and enters the battle with such carelessness, the witch takes advantage of his injured state and 'from his smoking corpse she tore | His head' (ll.253-254), which she then throws into the coven's cauldron, as both heroes experience a graphic death. Thus, devotion and survival are synonymous. Once A.G.A. and

[186] 'Song by J. Brenzaida to G.S.', *Complete* (80-81), ll.1-2.
[187] Julius's assassination is described in 'Rosina' (1841): 'I saw him fall, I saw the gore […] mingling on the marble floor', *Complete,* (134-137), ll.69-71.

Gondoline begin to mistrust Fancy's power – much as Anne's 'Lady Geralda' does – their loves are lost to them forever. This is a fictional representation of the insufficiency of imagination when utilised as a form of reunion. In their own writing, the Brontës appear to have been influenced by an inadequate substitute in the form of their mother's literary possessions.

While the Third Witch's tale mimics the division and Julius's death, the Second Witch's tale predicts the death of A.G.A. herself. The sorceress's story tells of 'a daughter fair, | Whose evil habits fill'd her heart' (ll.175-175), who subsequently plots to murder her mother so that she may 'seize on all her goods' (l.183), inheriting the 'hag's' wealth so she may become 'wanton with her lover' (l.184). Rather than await the woman's demise, the daughter ignores how the woman 'begg'd for life' (l.200) and graphically 'cut three fingers through | Ere she could reach her throat' (ll.207-208)This is mimicked in the death of A.G.A.[188] as Angelica, whom we understand to be her step-daughter[189], plots to assassinate 'A.G.A.' with her lover, Douglas. When Douglas fails, Angelica stabs the 'unarmed' and 'helpless' (l.114) A.G.A. to death: 'The blood streams down her brow; | The blood streams through her cold-black hair' (ll.242-243). Angelica and the hag's daughter are portrayed as equally bloodthirsty, seductive and ruthless, both seemingly driven by grievance and greed. Angelica does not specifically covet money, like the daughter of the second tale, but the crown: 'A princess she might be' (l.10). The term 'might' is key here, as Angelica is depicted as an 'inferior' counterpart of the woman she plans to depose, a 'princess' rather than a 'queen'. A subversion of the traditional fairy tale narrative, her beauty is considered secondary to her

[188] Emily Brontë, 'The Death of A.G.A.' (c.1841-44), *Complete*, (158-168).

[189] There are critical disputes concerning Angelica and A.G.A.'s relationship: while Ratchford declares Angelica to be A.G.A.'s 'one-time stepdaughter' (Ratchford 143), thus concluding Angelica's description of A.G.A. as her 'childhood's mate, my girlhood's guide' ('The Death of A.G.A.', l.79) to be evidence of A.G.A.'s former maternal role. Alexander, however, describes Angelica to instead be A.G.A.'s childhood friend from whom A.G.A. stole her lover, named only Amedeus. (Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown,* p.613) This analysis will argue that the sense of inheritance Angelica longs for, and believes she can achieve with the death of "Gondal's Queen", implies a maternal connection.

step-mother: '[b]ut oh, she had a sullen frown- | A lip of cruel scorn-' (ll.13-14). Her lover Douglas is prevented from following Angelica's orders once he sees the 'matchless eye' of A.G.A (l.233). As the flawed substitute intends to complete the murder herself, death is foreshadowed in the dimming of A.G.A.'s vitality: 'she (A.G.A.) was waning fast away - | Even Memory's voice grew dim' (151-152). As memory dwindles the once vibrant and beautiful A.G.A. literally fades: 'on her fading cheek, | The languid lid would close' (ll.147-148). Gondal's queen degenerates from vibrant heroine to ghostly image, a precursor to the final days and ultimate ghost of Catherine Earnshaw: 'the wife of a stranger: an exile, and outcast, thenceforth, from what had been my world.'[190]

Similarly, where the family magazine had once brought the Rossetti children together, its founder Frances would soon feel alienated from its production. The continuation of *Hodge-Podge* was paused in 1842 following a dramatic decline in Gabriele Rossetti's eyesight and general well-being. Suddenly, William Michael recalls, '[the] thriving condition of our household declined with my father's decline in health […] with the interruption of professional work [and] waning employment'.[191] However, it was not solely Gabriele's productivity which waned as a result. Seeking a potential cure for his sight problems, Frances accompanied her husband on a journey to Paris, leaving the children in the care of her sister, Margaret and their grandfather, Gaetano, with intermittent visits to their Uncle Henry Polydore[192]: 'Yesterday', Dante Gabriel tells his mother, 'Aunt Margaret, William, and myself, betook ourselves in the afternoon to 15 Park Village East […] first thing I did on my arrival was to enter the office of Uncle Henry.'[193] The children had been left in the care of Frances's

[190] *Wuthering Heights,* pp.104-105.
[191] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, p.10.
[192] Uncle Henry, William Michael recalls, 'preferred to anglicise his name into Polydore'. As a solicitor, he believed the Italian 'Polidori' would be off-putting to clients. *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1., p.7.
[193] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti dated Sunday 2nd June 1843, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2., p.10

progressive sisterhood.[194] Frances was determined that the geographical division would not cause disruption in the family dynamic, nor in the production of *Hodge-Podge.* She left for Paris with the hope that her encouragement of collaboration would sustain the productivity of her children's juvenilia, even without her consistent supervision. Although the Rossetti children did continue producing distinctive early works in their own right, these verses were not submitted to *Hodge-Podge.* The journal, therefore, became entirely constructed on Frances' work – predominantly diary entries describing her and Gabriele's time in Paris, alongside the occasional poem. She encouraged her children to be aware of deadlines and commitment to their craft, hence her continuation of *Hodge-Podge* – even when miles apart from its intended contributors – can be read as Frances practising the dedication she preached.

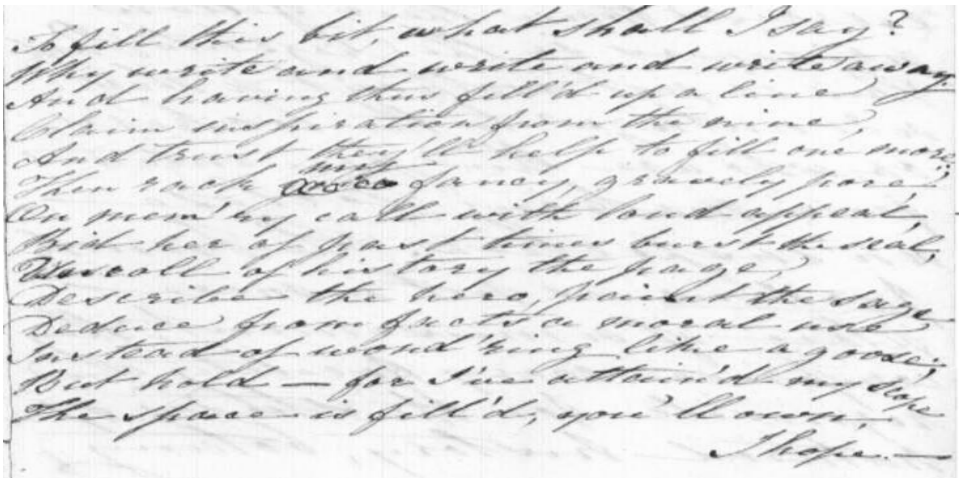

Figure 11. Frances Rossetti, 'Untitled Poem' in *Hodge-Podge,* Penultimate Issue (University of Columbia, dated 12th August 1843)

With Frances as the sole author and editor, the professional appearance and meticulous copying of *Hodge-Podge* begins to reduce until the professional mimicry, which once defined the structure of the magazine, declines. The subheadings no longer contain Issue Numbers,

[194] As Christina writes to Gabriele during this period: 'I, thanking mamma for her letter, and sending the love of Aunt Margaret and Maria and myself to mamma and Aunt Charlotte'. Christina Rossetti letter to Gabriele Rossetti, dated 26th June 1843 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti: With Some Supplementary Letters and Appendices, Eds.* William Michael Rossetti (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p.1.
The unusually simplistic and somewhat repetitive language can be attributed to, as Christina warns herself at the beginning of the letter, of this being her – so she believes - 'second letter that I ever wrote in Italian'.

presumably because Frances conceived the magazine so her children's works could be privately circulated amongst family and friends; without their juvenilia this periodical became a solitary enterprise to potentially distract Frances from her husband's illness. As a result, her painstaking standards begin to wane by the issue dated 12th August 1843. Each new issue was shorter and more cluttered, which we can interpret as a result of Frances's increasing personal anxieties during this period. Facing her husband's ill health and the longing to reunite with her children, affected her formerly meticulous editorial-style. Roe examines how her children 'responded to the maternal cues for cheerfulness and resilience' and 'directed their energies into writing stories and poems'.[195] Thus, in a letter of 1843, Dante Gabriel reassures his mother that he and his siblings are maintaining their creative output. He explains that he and his siblings had not terminated their collaborative methodology entirely; instead their most recent works will be included in the 'victorious *Scrap-book*'.[196] This *Scrapbook* was *Hodge-Podge's* sister periodical and 'short lived successor'[197]. Clearly, Dante Gabriel believed the beginnings of this second initiative held greater promise for the sibling's works: 'The *Illustrated Scrap-book* continues swimmingly. It improves with every number.'[198] He reluctantly shares his belief that *Hodge-Podge* had breathed its 'last gasp', citing the removal of her editorial eye as the reasoning: 'not a single perfect number has appeared since your departure.'[199] There is a correlation, therefore, between the most unkempt issue of *Hodge-Podge* from 12th August 1843 [Fig.11.] and Dante Gabriel's declaration of the journal's end. This issue was completed two days before Dante Gabriel sent his letter, implying that the ever-meticulous Frances was aware the magazine she created was reaching its discontinuation. Frances ceased to uphold the neatness of her private copies with the writing struggling to fit in the assigned area, and carelessly infiltrating

[195] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.59.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Elizabeth Prettejohn, Ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.77.
[198] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 14th August 1843 in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2., p.18.
[199] Ibid.

the margins or curving in an effort to save space. Also, Frances strikes out her writing, granting readers the impression of an ongoing editing process rather than a final draft as her early manuscripts have appeared. The reworked manuscript potentially demonstrates Frances's apprehension that her children had "outgrown" *Hodge-Podge* and, possibly, her supervision. *The Illustrated Scrapbook* was entirely a sibling enterprise, thus Frances's previous efforts to encourage collaboration in her children had succeeded; however there was a simultaneous concern that she was no longer required. As an editor, Frances was efficacious, as a mother she feared being equally surpassed.

The Illustrated Scrapbook's group effort was a particular source of pride for Dante Gabriel, who sought to assure his mother that their dynamic had not altered entirely in her absence. In fact, it appears the siblings grew closer as they came to depend on each other for the support they had previously received from their mother. Dante Gabriel became particularly fixated on Christina's poetry. In his letter to Frances, Dante Gabriel draws particular attention to some of his 'choicest specimens of sketching' and two 'poetic effusions' by Christina: *Rosalind* and *Corydon's Resolution* [sic.], which Dante Gabriel deems 'very good'.[200] Upon examination it is apparent as to why Dante Gabriel referred to these verses as 'effusions', as hyperbolic feelings of unrequited love permeate twelve-year-old Christina's poetry. Undoubtedly, Dante Gabriel was impressed by his sister's storylines because they were similar to his own. If we consider 'The Death of Paul and Virginia' and 'The Blessed Damozel', Christina's poem – fully titled 'Corydon's Lament and Resolution' – must have appealed to her brother, as it also explores the themes of divided love and the "devotion" of a man exceeding that of a woman.

[200] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 14th August 1843 in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2., p.18

Christina's poem details the titular Corydon's unreciprocated love for the unseen Chloe. Across three stanzas, the narrator laments Chloe's rejection of his marriage proposal

'I have wept and I have sighed, | Chloe will not be my bride'.[201] As the verse continues, Corydon resolves to forget Chloe and decides to wed another woman, seemingly to solicit a reaction from his indifferent ex-lover: 'her pride I'll mortify […] Amaryllis fair I'll wed, | Nor one tear for Chloe shed' (ll.9-12). The bitterness of the eponymous Corydon aptly depicts a lover scorned, recapitulated in the line 'She hath not my love returned' (l.6). This sense of abandonment is reminiscent of the Blessed Damozel's Beloved: 'we two, we two, thou say'st! | Yea, one wast thou with me.'[202] Just as the earthbound lover expects the heavenly Damozel to soothe his grief: 'Strove not her steps to reach my side | Down all the echoing stair?'[203], Corydon expects Chloe to comfort his heartache in spite of their separation, stating 'She hath not my pains relieved' (l.8). Corydon is placing the expectations upon his indifferent lover as one would a mother who consoles her children in their hour of need. It seems the twelve-year-old Christina's support network opened previously untouched themes of mature love and romantic betrayal. While Frances feared her creative role was being forgotten, Dante Gabriel found a new one. He inspired and encouraged his youngest sister, Janet Camp Troxell argues that he: 'recognised very early Christina's genius'[204], and Dante Gabriel's letters concerning the *Illustrated Scrapbook* suggested this to be the case. This new journal was the beginning of Dante Gabriel's role as a champion of his sister's work.[205] Five years later, in 1848, when Christina and William were away in Brighton, they 'dispatched samples of their poetic efforts to Gabriel' who was 'greatly interested, especially in

[201] Christina Rossetti, *Complete Works of Christina Rossetti* (London: Delphi Classics, 2012), (pp.98-99), ll.1-2.
[202] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel' in *Poems. A New Edition.* (London: Ellis & White, 1881) (pp.3-9), ll.97-98.
[203] Ibid., ll.65-66.
[204] Janet Camp Troxell, Ed. *Three Rossettis: Unpublished letters to and from Dante Gabriel, Christina, William* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), p.41.
[205] Dante Gabriel's support of Christina will be analysed in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis

Christina's compositions'.[206] He wrote to William Michael that he had 'grinned tremendously over Christina's *Plague* […] Her other is first rate'.[207] Thus began Dante Gabriel's 'indefatigable' campaign to bring Christina 'before the public'[208]; which led him to illustrate and assist in the publications of her *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862) and *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866).

The Rossetti siblings found motivational surrogates in each other. However, Emily Brontë's poetry emphasises that it is the nature of substitutions to be shadows of the real source. Her poem 'A.S. to G.S.'[209], particularly emphasises this in the form of Angelica, the step-daughter and non-blood-relation, and A.G.A., the potential ghost. This wraithlike image is perpetuated by Angelica's warped elegy to her stepmother. In an eerie example of subterfuge, A.G.A.'s assassin, Angelica, speaks to her half/step-brother Gerald and attempts to assure him that, although A.G.A. has passed away, her presence is still with them:

> Remember still she is not dead
>
> She sees us Gerald now
>
> Laid where her angel spirit fled
>
> 'Mid heath and frozen snow (ll.13-16)

Her language, although an over-compensatory veil for her villainy, is highly reminiscent of Heathcliff's upon the death of Catherine Earnshaw. Once again, the lost mother figure is imagined in her grave, as in Branwell's Angrian poems. However, as '[t]he murdered do haunt their murderers' (*Wuthering Heights,* 140), so does A.G.A.'s memory haunt the conscience of Angelica. Within the murderess's fallacious attempts to "console" Gerald, she must simultaneously assure herself that A.G.A. is dead and 'she can ne'er return | To share

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[206] Camp Troxell, Ed. *Three Rossettis*, p.41.
[207] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 30th August 1848, in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2. p.41
[208] Camp Troxell, Ed. *Three Rossettis: Unpublished letters to and from Dante Gabriel, Christina, William*, p.140.
[209] Emily Brontë, 'A.S. to G.S.' (1841) *Complete,* p.137-138.

our earthly woe –' (ll.23-24)[210] The same purgatorial fate is met by Gondoline. Driven mad by the witches' murder of her lover, beneath the 'moon [that] sweetly shone' (l.274), Gondoline charges into the coven's meeting place as her lover did the battlefield, suddenly:

> The maid was seen no more. – But oft
>
> Her ghost is known to glide
>
> At midnight's silent, solemn hour,
>
> Along the ocean's side. (ll.285-288)

Gondoline's ghost appears in the "in-betweens", at midnight and along the divide between land and sea, just as Cathy dies giving birth to Catherine Linton at midnight (137). Dorothy Cooper observes the magnitude of the midnight metaphor in Emily's poetry: it is 'the driving force […] the familiar dark hour in which "Fancy", the "Strange Power", her "Angel" are permitted to come'.[211] The significance of "in-betweens" is shown not only in the transitory time utilised in Emily's poetry as well as *Wuthering Heights,* but also in the spatial divide which Cathy's ghost haunts between the window and the moors. As *Wuthering Heights* describes: 'The day she (Cathy) was buried, there came a fall of snow […] It blew bleak as winter – all round was solitary.' (210) Both Angelica and Heathcliff deny playing any part in their respective heroines' demises however, as Nelly argues '[y]our pride cannot blind God' (139), and both sinners attempt to ignore their own guilt and grief by denying the sorrow of others. Heathcliff commands Nelly to stop crying immediately following Cathy's passing: 'Damn you all! She wants none of your tears!' (139), Angelica's poem begins with similar defiance 'I do not weep, I would not weep | Our mother needs no tears' (ll.1-2). Denial of

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[210] While Angelica hopes her step-mother will not haunt her, as her father Alfred Sidonia does his 'feudal home' Aspin Castle 'Written in Aspin Castle', *Complete,* (139-142), l.46): 'unsheltered shut from heaven | An outcast for eternity –' (ll.82-83)

[211] Dorothy Cooper, "The Briarfield Chronicles: The Romantics and Emily Bronte", *Thebriarfieldchronicles.blogspot.co.uk*, 2013 <http://thebriarfieldchronicles.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/the-romantics-and-emily-bronte-by.html> [accessed 15 August 2016]

"In-between" hours are frequent features of Emily's poetry, especially noon and midnight. These times are approached as notably visionary moments, consider her poem 'There shines the moon, at noon of night' (*Complete,* p.36, l.1) or 'XXXVII': 'How long will you remain? The midnight hour | Has told the last note from [the] minister tower [sic.]' (*Complete,* p.110, ll.1-2).

mourning is a prominent theme in both Kirke White and Brontë's work. Irene Tayler observes the recurring motif of '[t]he joy of […] mother-infant communion and the desolation of its loss'[212] in Emily's works. This image is particularly poignant when we recall the restrictive connection to Emily's mother, which *Remains* embodied.

Unhappy Angelica is not only a poor substitute as a queen, but also as a daughter. In 'Geraldine', 'A Song to A.A.' (1838)[213], and 'A Farewell to Alexandra'[214] (1839), A.G.A. is seen to have a child, a daughter named Alexandra Almeda. However, this heiress does not survive as in this trinity of motherhood poems, the child's life appears to hang in the balance: 'Farewell unblessed, unfriended child, | I cannot bear to watch thee die!' ('A Farewell to Alexandra' ll.35-36). It is in these depictions of motherhood and the martyred child that we complete our comparison of A.G.A. and 'Gondoline'. The First Witch once more uses the poignant image of a shipwreck and places a young woman within 'a little bark | Upon a roaring wave' (ll.117-118). However, this unnamed lady is not alone: 'she had got a child in her arms | It was her only child' (ll.121-122). Seemingly aware of the fates conspiring against them, the woman appears to keep watch over her infant; memorising its appearance as it sleeps in her arms, regardless of the storm, taking particular note of the 'infant's hair' (l.139), which the witch then mocks, 'It must have been a lovely child | To have such lovely hair' (ll.147-148). She then throws a lock into the cauldron. The witch obtains the hair after raising the tempest and transfiguring 'in the shape of the wind' (l.137) she throws the baby 'overboard' (l.140). Although Emily does not inflict a similar death on the child Alexandra, her 'Song to A.A.' places A.G.A. and her child on a 'shuddering' boat (l.5) as they sail across 'Elderno lake so rudely tossing' (l.6). Yet again, the storm does not disturb the infant's sleep in spite of the '(w)aves above thy cradle break | Foamy tears are on thy cheek' (ll.9-10).

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[212] Irene Tayler *Holy Ghosts: The Male Muses of Emily and Charlotte Brontë* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1990), p.37.
[213] *Complete,* p.67. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[214] *Complete,* p.106-107. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

Paralleling Kirke White once more, 'Song for A.A.' also draws attention to Alexandra's hair, describing her as 'my dark haired child' (l.4) and 'my fair-browed child' (l.8). It is the possibility of shipwreck, not the physical act, that is so distressing, as the child is unaware of the dangers while dreaming – a state, much like "Fancy", in which we are unaware of reality.

The poem begins: 'This shall be thy lullaby' (l.1), mimicking yet another poem of Kirke White's 'The Lullaby of a Female Convict to her Child, the night previous to execution'.[215] This verse begins 'Sleep, baby mine', a line repeated again in the final stanza of the poem. This concept of a lullaby and comforting repetition is utilised in 'Song to A.A.' which begins '[t]his shall be thy lullaby' (l.1) and repeats '[s]leep stilly/softly sleep'[216]. In 'A Farewell to Alexandra', A.G.A. blends lullabies with swan songs once more as she sings: 'coldly spreads thy couch of snow | And harshly sounds thy lullaby.' (ll.23-24) Much like the exiled A.G.A. who laments her 'unblessed, unfriended child' ('A Farewell to Alexandra' l.35), Kirke White's convict laments the '[p]oor wayward wretch!' that is her baby, asking 'who will heed thy weeping, | When soon an outcast from the world thou'lt be?' (ll.9-10) Much like the banished queen of Gondal, the convict has been consigned to a 'low grave of shame and infamy' (l.12), and she fears her child is equally damned. The fear of 'inherited sin' is equally palpable in A.G.A.'s relationship with Alexandra. In 'A.S. to G.S.' the description of A.G.A.'s snow-covered resting place can be interpreted as posthumous justice to the women who left her daughter, Alexandra, to die in a wintery forest: 'Alas the flakes are heavily falling | They cover fast each guardian crest' ('A Farewell to Alexandra', ll.29-30), much like Emily's sister Maria and her namesake, the fates of mother and daughter are paralleled in poetry. Moreover, in *Wuthering Heights,* Catherine Linton's environment begins to mimic that of her late mother's wintery grave as she is drawn to the Heights: '[t]he moon shone bright; a sprinkling of snow covered the ground' (204-205). There is a sense of history repeating itself

[215] *Remains,* Vol.1. pp.61-62. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[216] 'Sleep stilly sleep' (l.4); 'Sleep softly sleep' (l.8).

in Kirke White's fiction which influenced Emily's writing. In the Brontë edition of *Remains,* the poem prior to 'Lullaby', titled simply 'A Ballad'[217], also bear signs of having influenced Gondalian verses. The ballad depicts yet another mother trying to lull her child to sleep: 'Be hush'd, be hush'd, yet bitter winds' (l.1). The unforgiving tempests that surround this pair are similar to the tempestuous environment A.G.A. abandons her child to, reflecting Kirke White's narrator – who is also 'exiled from [her] native home' (l.9) – the 'winds will not let it (the child) sleep' (l.14). Similarly, Alexandra is left in a 'storm more madly wild | The mountain drifts are tossed on high' ('A Farewell to Alexandra', ll.33-34) However, much as A.G.A. and her daughter are seemingly abandoned by Julius, the ballad's narrator is described as '[h]arsh' (l.19) and never 'will he shelter' his child (l.20). He has left the mother 'faint and lone to roam | A heart-sick weary wanderer' (ll.9-12). The recollection of the father, Steve Vine argues, is a reflection of Emily's motif of the 'refusal of mourning'[218], in that by connecting the unseen Julius with his child, A.G.A. is denying their impending fate. By enforcing a connection with Julius on the child, much as the Brontës constructed a relationship with Maria through *Remains,* the poem succeeds in 'a strange preservation of rather than relinquishment of the beloved – and elegy modulates into ecstatic transgression'.[219] Preservation is essential in the Brontës approach to this edition. Evidently, Emily's favourite Gondalian mother-figure is saturated with intertextuality from her own mother's relic, an object which the Brontë children were forced to use as a substitute for their mother's own literary intellect – the siblings, especially Emily, found poetic image through which to process their dissatisfaction with these proxies. Poignantly, Kirke White's poetry – with its numerous accounts of motherhood, shipwreck and loss - allows Brontë to process what his *Remains* represents, the loss of her mother's influence. Yet, as soon as both Kirke White and Emily's protagonists become aware of Fancy's precarious nature, the once

[217] *Remains,* Vol.1. p.60. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[218] Stevie Vine, 'Romantic Ghosts: The Refusal of Mourning in Emily Brontë's Poetry', *Victorian Poetry,* Vol.37, No.1. (Spring, 1999), (99-107), p.99.
[219] Vine, 'Romantic Ghosts: The Refusal of Mourning in Emily Brontë's Poetry', p.99.

reassuring pastime serves as a reminder – or a Cathy's ghost – of, rather than a surrogate for, what has been lost.

If Dante Gabriel was substituting Frances's influence for his own with regards to his youngest sister's works, we can imagine this would have been a source of concern for Frances. We see signs of Dante Gabriel's hyperbolic romance in 'Corydon's Resolution' and the beginnings of his sensual Pre-Raphaelite persona in his own juvenilia. In fact, when under his Aunt Margaret's care, there were apprehensions that Dante Gabriel was reading materials inappropriate for his age, including the atheistic sentiments of Percy Shelley. Dante Gabriel addresses these accusations in another letter to his mother:

> As to the indecent books which you speak of in your last letter to me […] I am completely in the dark, since I have not read a single volume, except those of which I have spoken to you […] I really wish that Aunt Margaret would refrain from circulating such falsehoods.[220]

In spite of Dante Gabriel's protestations, we perceive how these young writers benefitted from a motherly influence. Where Aunt Margaret accepted the maternal roles of nurturing the children and monitoring their education, *Illustrated Scrapbook* found a new editorial voice in Maria, who had undertaken Frances' position in the family collaboration. Writing to Frances of the birth of *Scrapbook,* Dante Gabriel describes how his eldest sister took to this role: 'Maria has also authorized me to insert in the victorious *Scrap-book* her *Vision of Human Life*, originally written for the fallen *Hodge-podge*.'[221] The evident authority of Maria in this letter embodies the pseudo-maternal authority she fully assimilated to following Frances's removal. Maria was accustomed to adopting a "lady-of-the-house" position in her mother's absence, being recalled by William Michael and Christina as a resident 'muse in a

[220] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 14 August 1843, in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2., (17-20), p.19.
[221] Ibid., p.18.

pinafore' which balanced Dante Gabriel's 'familiar spirit – familiar but fiery, and not lightly to be rebelled against.'[222]

From her early childhood, Maria demonstrated the inherent motherliness she maintained with her young siblings and shared with their mother. In one letter of 1835, an eight-year-old Maria writes to her mother, who had left the home to visit her own ailing mother: 'I hope that Grandmamma will very soon be better, and that then you will come back.'[223] In this earlier example of Frances being required to leave home, Maria reassures her of the entire family's well-being by relaying information from the household, much like a young domestic. Her missive details household matters such as Dante Gabriel's birthday requests, attempting to have the piano forte tuned, her siblings' eating habits – 'Gabriel has not eaten any breakfast these two days'[224] – and twice assuring Frances that the family are 'all very well'.[225] Subsequently, in the summer of 1843 Maria assumed a maternal role once more, although it was a function she shared with Aunt Margaret. Maria's intellectual facilities became entirely focused on her siblings' work and daily efforts. Although very little evidence of Maria's editorial style survives from this time of Frances and Gabriele's temporary relocation in 1843, we can assume that she was supportive and successful as she continued to be held in high esteem by her siblings, especially Christina.[226] Although Maria was continuing successfully *in loco parentis,* Frances's maternal anxieties did not abate. Subsequently, *Hodge-Podge,* which began life as a piece of family collaboration, instead became a space through which Frances could vent her fears of being replaced, as well as pine for her children's company. As Roe summarises, the family journal became a journal in another form through which Frances

[222] William Michael Rossetti on Maria: 'On the two junior children, Christina and myself, Maria exercised something like the function of an inspiring Muse in a pinafore'. *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331 (The Bodleian Library, Oxford), pp.14-15.
[223] Maria Rossetti letter to Frances Rossetti, dated 15th June 1835 (Angeli-Dennis Collection, University of British Colombia), Box 13, Folder 9, (3 pages) p.1.
[224] Ibid, pp.2-3.
[225] Ibid, p.1 & p.3.
[226] As will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

could 'communicate the unsayable' and 'reveal her maternal anxieties to her children without raising an alarm or requiring a solution.'[227]

Divided from her children and the collaborative atmosphere of their house, Frances suffered from writer's block. For instance, one poem written during her stay in France is untitled and is simply used to fill a blank space on the fifth issue, dated 12th August 1843. [Fig.11.] The poem reads as an almost stream-of-consciousness style of contemplating what to write: 'To fill this bit, what shall I say?' (l.1) The poem depicts someone who finds writing futile without inspiration: 'Why write and write and write away(?)' (l.2.) Her Fancy tries to call on her memories 'with loud appeal' (l.7), feasibly attempting to recall the co-operation of her family home to invoke inspiration. Although poetry eluded her, Frances did find comfort in diary-style writings. The final two issues of *Hodge-Podge* detail Frances and Gabriele's visits to tourist sites in Paris, describing Le Jardin des Plantes, and the Panthéon in exceptional detail. Le Jardin des Plantes, Frances tells us, is a monument to Cuvier, and she recalls how 'in the Museum we saw […] his statue in robes, with his hand resting on a globe which one of his fingers penetrates; also a statue of Jussieu.' (Issue Five, p.2) She describes her and Gabriele's walks in detail, as if attempting to immerse potential readers. Her diary is so detailed that one feels her steps can be recreated from her description, '[e]ntering Père la Chaise we proceeded up a long avenue […] lined with trees meeting in an arch above, and forming a shade doubly delightful after the burning walk up to the long street.' (Issue Five, p.2) Stuart Sherman argues that the diary form allows the writer to keep 'a running report on identities both shifting and fixed, private and public'[228]; however, in Frances's *Hodge-Podge* diary she is not seeking a new identity but attempting to maintain her matriarch status. She writes in detail in order for her children to feel they are travelling with her, and vice versa. Hence, although the unedited style of these final issues demonstrates that these

[227] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.58.
[228] Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660–1785* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.8.

entries were not immediately shared, as well as Frances's deracinated state-of mind, there is also something extremely deliberate about Frances's writing-style. As Amy Wink argues, although we may consider diaries as 'full of immediate unedited responses or as the pure and most authentic autobiography, it is important to recognise that writing is not unadulterated thought […] writing means spinning thought into the potent and empowering web of written language.'[229] The "power" Frances wished to achieve was to reunite with her children through language. Consequently, any lingering optimism seems to diminish once Frances visits the cemetery of Père La Chaise, where she is captivated by a monument to a husband and wife: 'two arms seems to force their way out of the grave beneath […] their hands are clasped, and underneath is inscribed: *"Nous serons réunis*"', which translates to the promise: 'We will be together' (Final Issue, p.2). Roe interprets the sombre tone of this diary entry as the image of reunion which 'touched the mother who was separated from her children, but it must also have been a reminder to the wife of her husband's serious illness, and the very real possibility that he was dying.'[230] Thus the diary served for Frances, as it did for many other nineteenth-century women, Simon Marsden argues, as an act of recording 'a self in process […] meaningful interpretation upon the events of one's life and to reveal and validate the coherent self that experiences them.'[231]

It was a cathartic exercise Frances's daughters would use in their later works, for example Maria's *Letters to My Bible-Class* and Christina's *Time Flies,* but also one Frances would utilise until her death. Frances kept an extremely poignant diary between 1881 and the day before her death. In her final years, she used the journal form to once more process the separation from loved ones; sadly this was a much more permanent separation as this diary details the death of Dante Gabriel on 9th April 1882. On this day, Frances completes the following entry:

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[229] Amy L Wink, *She Left Nothing in Particular: The Autobiographical Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Women's Diaries* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), p.xv.
[230] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland*, p.59.
[231] Simon Marsden, 'Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* Vol.28, No.1 (2006) (35-47), p.35.

> Dr Harris once or twice said he still lived, then said he was dead. This took place shortly after 9 0' clock p. m. […] The instant cause of death assigned by Dr Harris was that the (?) poison touched the brain, and he afterwards assured us that there was no pain.[232]

The diary became so well known as a method of processing division amongst the Rossettis, that Christina could not leave Frances's diary unfinished on her death-day. Drawing a literal line beneath her mother's entries, on 8th April 1886 Frances's handwriting is replaced with Christina's. Having just lost her mother, Christina writes in parentheses: '[I Christina G. Rossetti happy and unhappy daughter of so dear a saint write the last words […]]'[233] Thus, the juvenile medium of *Hodge-Podge* not only bears signs of the artistic styles which would define the careers of Frances's children, but also the writing methods which Frances herself would continue until the end of her life.

Whilst the Rossetti heritage often meant they were too reliant on inspiration to always meet these deadlines, with the overseeing of Frances meaning that the children second-guessed their talent. Inspiration from the mother's techniques and styles of writing threatened to encourage over-dependence, as the desire for approval grew into need. For the Brontës such inspiration could only come from possessions, literary legacies directing their talent without concrete approval or approbation. Both families faced the loss of this endorsement in either the temporary, or permanent, feelings of absence of the maternal.

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[232] Frances Rossetti Diary Papers, 'Miscellaneous papers, 1816-1957', Facs.286. (Bodelian Library, Oxford) [Original MS. from University of British Columbia] (No page numbers given)

[233] Frances Rossetti Diary Papers, dated 9th April 1882, Facs.286. (Bodelian Library, Oxford) (No page numbers given).

CHAPTER TWO:

Poetry and Politics: The Influence of the Brontë and Rossetti Patriarchs on the Juvenilia

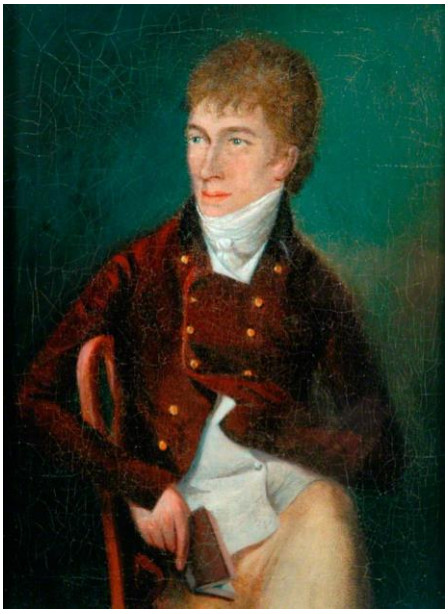

Figure 1. Unknown Artist, 'Reverend Patrick Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, Date Unknown)
Figure 2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Gabriele Rossetti' (Private Collection, 1853)

Literary Patriarchs: Leading by Example

Where the Brontë and Rossetti matriarchs emphasised the importance of study amongst their children, Patrick Brontë (1777-1861) and Gabriele Rossetti (1783-1854) statuses as self-made immigrant poets meant they presented a standard of self-discipline required for publication. The humble origins of both Patrick and Gabriele proved to their children that creative talent could overcome the limitations of class, and thus played highly supportive roles in their children's literary apprenticeships. 'Had I been numbered amongst the calm, concentric [sic.] men of the world,' Patrick Brontë informed Elizabeth Gaskell[1], 'I should not

[1] Dudley Green argues the damage to Patrick's reputation remains unrepaired from Gaskell's hyperbolic speculations of him in her biography of his daughter Charlotte: 'in the century and a half since Mrs Gaskell published her famous *Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857, Patrick Brontë has been a much maligned man.' (Dudley Green, *Patrick Brontë: Father of Genius* (Stroud: The History Press, 2010), p.9.)
Juliet Barker summarises the intention behind Gaskell's distortion of Patrick was a result of her determination to banish 'the brutal, coarse and vulgar "Currer Bell" of the contemporary myth for ever'. (Juliet Barker, 'Saintliness, Treason and Plot: The Writing of Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte*

have been as I now am, and I should in all probability never have had such children as mine have been.'[2] This strongminded declaration is true of both Patrick Brontë and Gabriele Rossetti. In Ireland, Patrick rose from his underprivileged beginnings to become an educated schoolmaster. In England, he reinvented himself as a clergyman, poet and even as a politically astute essayist and letter-writer. Gabriele equally ascended during his early life in Italy from his lower-class roots to become a secretary and student. In England, he reimagined himself as a professor of Italian, scholar of Dante and an exotic Romantic poet, as this chapter will analyse. Reinvention of characters and re-imaginations of historic events are consequently a primary motif of both Brontë and Rossetti juvenilia. This collaboration with the fathers' tales of these experiences, as well as their fiction, will be the focus of this chapter.

Patrick was the first Brontë to appear in print and became prolific in a short space of time, with anthologies and novellas such as: *Cottage Poems* (1811), *The Cottage in the Wood* (1815) and *The Maid of Killarney* (1818) to his name. Patrick's erudite career is exceptionally impressive when we consider his origins amongst the humble cottagers of his hometown of Rathfriland in County Down, born the first of ten children to Hugh Brunty[3], a farm labourer and his wife Eleanor "Alice", née McClory. It seemed Patrick was equally bound for a life of manual work, having already observed and practised trades such as blacksmithing and weaving, until, John Cannon describes: his 'obsession with *Paradise Lost* led to a chance meeting which changed his whole life.'[4] The Reverend Andrew Harshaw, admiring Patrick's

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Brontë', Brontë Society Transactions, Vol.21, 4 (2013) (101-115), p.101.) Much as she utilised the death of Maria Brontë to illustrate a supposed absence of a "ladylike" influence in the Parsonage, Gaskell amplifies Patrick's "eccentricities" to augment this dearth of civility. Patrick's character would have to be sacrificed in order to "rescue" his daughter's. Please refer to these texts for further details.

[2] Patrick Brontë letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, dated 30th July 1857, cited in Green, *Father of Genius,* p.x.

[3] Juliet Barker explains that '[a]t a time when literacy was extremely rare, especially in rural districts of Ireland, the unusual Brontë name was spelt in a variety of ways, ranging from Prunty to Brunty and Bruntee, with no consistent version until Patrick himself decided on "Brontë".' *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.3.

[4] John Cannon, *The Road to Haworth: The Story of the Brontës' Irish Ancestry* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p.77.

rendition of Milton, offered to tutor Patrick free of charge. Thus, Patrick spent every spare moment studying philosophy and literature. The education he received allowed Patrick to rise and become a teacher:

> knowing that my Father, could afford me no pecuniary aid I began to think of doing something for myself – I therefore opened a public school – and in this line, I continued for five or six years; I was then a Tutor in a Gentleman's Family.[5]

Patrick's vehement belief in the power of education began in his hometown in County Down, as did another of Patrick's passions, one which greatly influenced his children's juvenilia, his fascination with battlefield experiences. Five years after becoming a schoolmaster, Patrick witnessed one of the most significant events in Irish history: The Irish Rebellion of 1798. Inspired by the American and French Revolutions, a republican group known as the 'United Irishmen' mutinied against English rule, and County Down found itself as the core of insurrectionist activity. Patrick does not appear to have taken part in the rebellion; nonetheless Dudley Green maintains that the experience of seeing Ireland in such turmoil invoked in Patrick 'constant horror of revolution' and drew him to explore how humans could declare war on one another.[6] Although the revolution was suppressed after a few months, Patrick's life continued to centre around politics and edification. Elizabeth Gaskell applauds Patrick's assiduous nature in leaving his childhood home in 1802 after earning a scholarship to study theology at St. John's College, Cambridge: 'separating himself from his family, and determining to maintain himself […] by the labour of his brain.'[7] By 1803, however, there was a renewed fear of invasion from the French as Napoleon's Grand Army only seems to accumulate power. Local militias and university corps were established with university authorities reluctantly granting permission 'for all lay members of the university to be

[5] Patrick Brontë letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, dated 20th June 1855, cited in Barker, *The Brontës*, p.2.
[6] Green, *The Father of Genius,* p.25.
[7] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1857), p.30.
Patrick would graduate with a first-class degree and embark upon his clerical career.

allowed one hour a day for military drill.'[8] Many of the colleges at Cambridge instated college leagues, and Patrick was included amongst them. Under these drills, Patrick became intrigued by battlefield strategy, weapons design, and the emotional consequences of war – the latter of which is embodied in many of his published poems. Such insights were ideal for his young children, who became equally enraptured by warfare narratives, and thus created the ever-turbulent Angrian and Gondalian kingdoms. Their earliest juvenilia subsequently explored the mentality of soldiers; frontline strategy and writing as an outlet through which to process the horror of battle.

For the Rossettis, as well as the Brontës, art was a method of processing political upheaval as well as improving one's status. This attitude arose from knowledge of their father Gabriele's tumultuous life and career. William Michael Rossetti's introduction to his father's *Versified Autobiography* (1901) speaks of Gabriele's modest origins with pride. Born to Nicola Rossetti, a blacksmith, and Maria Francesca, the daughter of a shoemaker – after whom the eldest Rossetti daughter is named – William Michael describes his father's home life as occupying a 'creditable, though certainly a by no means distinguished, position in the small Vestese community'[9], emphasising how his father grew to become a scholar who kept the company of kings. The fact that Gabriele also became a celebrated poet when neither of his parents could read or write is a testament to his philomathic nature,[10] eventually leaving the 'humble cradle'[11] of his hometown of Vasto and relocating to Naples. With his self-proclaimed 'studious aptitude'[12] Gabriele earned a position as the secretary to the local *Marchese*, a scholarship to the University of Naples, and later a position as Curator of Ancient Marbles and Bronzes in the Capodimonte Museum. Through intellect Gabriele progressed

[8] Green, *The Father of Genius,* p.25.
[9] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Gabriele Rossetti: A Versified Autobiography*, Ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Sands and Co., 1901), p.7.
[10] As William Michael emphasises in his introduction to the *Versified Autobiography*, p.8.
[11] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti* (1901), Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.8.
[12] Ibid, p.9.

through the ranks of academia, but it was his fiercely proud Italian identity and nationalism that began his poetic career. King Ferdinand of the Two Sicillies[13] bestowed a grant upon Gabriele as an expression of gratitude for the verses he dedicated to his home country. The 'strong manifesto of patriotic feeling'[14] contained within these poems were considered ideal to appease the masses in the midst of Italy's tumultuous political climate. The War of the Polish Succession (1733-35) saw both Naples and Sicily ruled by conquering Austria. Eventually the French army would intervene and drive the Austrian forces out. However, their intercession would spark the beginning of a turf-war, which saw sovereignty of Naples and Sicily oscillate between Austrian and French rule throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[15] The continuing campaigns saw King Ferdinand deposed and restored on multiple occasions, consistently abandoning his kingdoms in search of asylum. Although King Ferdinand combined the much contested nations of Sicily and Naples into 'The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies' in 1816, political instability resulted in loss of national morale and the subsequent formations of anarchist groups and secret societies. The most notable of all of these was the Carbonari ("charcoal-makers"), of which Gabriele was a prominent member. They wished to make Italy free of any French or Austrian influence and, William Michael explains, believed themselves a party advocating 'constitutional monarchy' rather than 'republicanism'.[16] Accordingly, Gabriele's poetry advocated the final freedom of Italy and

[13] this thesis will not refer to King Ferdinand by his regnal name as it has multiple variants: in Naples he was known as Ferdinand IV, in Sicily he was Ferdinand III, and when he combined the territories into 'the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies' in 1816, he was known as King Ferdinand I.

[14] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, with a Memoir*, Vol.1. (London: Roberts Brothers, 1895), p.291.

[15] The most significant conflicts during this period can be listed as follows: In January 1799 the French, now led by Branwell Brontë's real-life anti-hero Napoleon Bonaparte, abolished the kingdom of Naples and named it part of the French Parthenopean Republic, which saw King Ferdinand forced to flee his kingdom. He was restored soon after in June 1799 after his army forced the French out of Naples. Nevertheless in 1805, Gabriele and his countrymen witnessed further diplomatic upheaval, Napoleon's victory over the Austrian and Russian armies at the Battle of Austerlitz (2nd Demember 1805) meant he could send an army to conquer Italy once more, and yet again King Ferdinand was forced to leave his country. The French re-entered Naples in February 1806. After the fall of Napoleon, Ferdinand was restored to his throne again in 1808.

[16] William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol. 1, pp.12-13.

caused 'a great sensation.'[17] Nevertheless, by 1820 armed insurrectionists had marched through Naples threatening to depose the "weak" King Ferdinand.[18] The revolution failed, but Gabriele was nevertheless accused of treason in 1821, his rhetorical verse being interpreted as a call-to-arms by the paranoid monarch. Although he would flee to Malta, and then England, Alison Milbank explains, Gabriele maintained 'a reputation in Italy by means of his political verse, which were circulated extensively and set to music as patriotic calls to national independence.'[19] This chapter will consider how Gabriele's celebration of Italian art and political debate manifested in his children's earliest juvenilia in the plight of fictional Italian nobles; exiled knights and subordinates rebelling against the monarchy.

'Welcome, Heroes, to the War':

The Influence of the Fathers' Political Beliefs and Writings

Albert Einstein stated that play is 'the highest form of research'[20], and through their early plays and toys the Brontë and Rossetti children appropriated their fathers' political beliefs and experiences into narratives. Laurie Langbauer observes the influx of juvenilia which occurred in the years following revolutions of the late-eighteenth century, including the American Revolution of the 1770s and the French Revolution of 1789, and the Napoleonic Wars: '[a]ffairs of state also seemed to solicit a youthful response since they were essentially the politics of war, which materially consumed youth as fodder.'[21] Young writers were overwhelmed by accounts of these conflicts; with young soldiers reflecting on their time on the battlefields, provoking their readers to react to the horrors of war. Butcher emphasises the excess of chronicles which were published long after the war: 'allusions to an unsettling

[17] Ibid., p.291.
[18] Andrew McConnell Stott's *The Vampyre Family: Passion, Envy and the Curse of Byron* states that the revolution was inspired by both Carbonari activity and a similar revolution in Spain in 1820 (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd., 2013), p.278.
[19] Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p.119.
[20] Albert Einstein cited in Raph Koster, *Theory of Fun for Game Design* (Sabastopol: Safari Books, 2014), p.278.
[21] Laurie Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition: Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750-1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.43.

mentality were evident, for example, over 200 military memoirs were published after the Battle of Waterloo'[22], inciting a 'post-Napoleonic traumatic undercurrent running through society in early-nineteenth-century Britain.[23] An inter-generational communication between the war correspondent and the child writer sprang as a result, as the military men implored the children of the next era to learn from the conflicts of the previous. Nevertheless, the initial appeal of such historical tales – especially for children – is the "excitement" of the confrontation. As James C. Reaney maintains: 'if you're going to write about toy soldiers, what boys delight in doing with them is staging fights where many are killed, inevitably resulting in fictional carnage.'[24] However, it was not only the young men of the Brontë and Rossetti families who were drawn to the tumult of war.

Figure 3. Branwell Brontë, 'Terror' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1830)

[22] Emma Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* Vol.22, No.4 (2017) (465-481), pp.465-466.
[23] Ibid, p.465.
[24] James C. Reaney, 'A Fresh Look at Patrick Branwell Brontë: the Prose', *Brontë Society Transactions* Vol.26, Issue 1. (2013) (1-9), p.3.

Many biographers and critics have considered the Brontës' childish fascination with "mindless violence" as a precursor to both the "coarseness" of the sisters' novels and Branwell's turbulent final years.[25] The boyish Branwell immersed himself in the narrative, with many Angrian sketches depicting an Angrian civil war [Fig.3.] and his poems, such as 'The Angrian Welcome (1834)', seemingly glorifying the sacrificial role of the soldier:

> Welcome, Heroes, to the War,
>
> Welcome to your glory.
>
> Will you seize your swords and dare
>
> To be renowned in story?[26]

Daphne du Maurier maintains that Branwell found his 'speciality' in the waging of fictional war: '[t]here must be battles and yet more battles. Blood, and mud, and death and disaster.'[27] His absorption in violent scenes was not bound to the battlefield in his early work, as exhibited in the three-part poem series 'The Ammon Tree Cutter, a poem by young Soult the Ryhmer [sic.] (1829)'.[28] The titular tree cutter's *modus operandi* is explained as follows: 'these are most a dangerous class of men [sic.] – Inhabitants of Paris and its environs they go out in the Nights – and cut down all the Ammon Trees' (48-49). Although seemingly harmless to humans, initially, the Ammon skinners are being swept away by the chaos of the French Revolution. They begin to 'burn all the vineyards of those against whom they have a spite', worst of all 'if they catch the owners they flay them allive [sic.] – and then tie—them to a tree with their skin as an umbrella.' (49) Fortunately, our author, Young Soult – Angria's

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[25] Including James C. Reaney, 'A Fresh Look at Patrick Branwell Brontë: the Prose', *Brontë Society Transactions* Vol.26, Issue 1. (2013) (1-9); Emma Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* Vol.22, No.4 (465-481); Christine Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self: Branwell Brontë's Microcosmic World', *Journal of Juvenilia Studies,* Vol.1 (2018) (3-19) and Robert G. Collins, *The Hand of the Arch-Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

[26] Branwell Brontë, 'The Angrian Welcome' in *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983) (194-196), ll.1-4.

[27] Daphne du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), p.32.

[28] Patrick Branwell Brontë, *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë: 1827-1833,* Vol.1 Ed. Victor A. Neufeldt (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999), pp.48-54. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

answer to a Romantic poet and one of Branwell's pseudonyms – comes across one of these sadistic men and 'rushed on the Murderer. | I seized him by his throat & cried' (51). The third and final instalment sees Young Soult relish the fury of the French crowds as the Ammon Cutter is lead to the guillotine, but not before taking one final casualty:

> The villain raised a Horrid wailing cry
>
> […] I am then doomed to die the Dismal death
>
> Yes but before I do Revenge is Mine
>
> Revenge Revenge Revenge so saying he flew
>
> On the Judge Murat and like a madman
>
> Tore him in pieces saying Revenge (52)

This graphic work demonstrates Branwell's early contemplations of violence for violence's sake. Such macabre scenes were not limited to Branwell, however, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Brontë sisters would engage with "masculine" themes in order to assume authorial equality with their brother, and appeal to their inspirational father. Through Patrick, the Brontë siblings learned to emulate the tone and the sense of risk in war and rebellion; an atmosphere Patrick himself experienced by living through the Irish Rebellion and the Napoleonic Wars. Consequently, despite not having any personal ties to the military, the Brontës' paracosms are full of battles and discussions of army strategies, inspired by what Fannie Ratchford summarises as Patrick's 'taste for military science and the study of tactics'.[29]

Equally, the Rossetti children were immersed in the same charged political climate, emphasised by the exiled status of their father. Gabriele was consistently bemused by how his artistic reputation guaranteed his banishment: 'it is a strange thing that I who don't at all

[29] Fannie Ratchford, *The Brontës' Web of Childhood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p.7.

understand what politics are, should for politics be persecuted and exiled'.[30] However, upon his arrival in England, Gabriele emphasised his role as a political exile to provoke pathos in his new readership. His awareness grew as he increasingly kept company amongst fellow exiles, who flooded the Rossetti household throughout the siblings' childhoods. This inherent anger and sense of injustice inspired the Rossetti children to explore these themes in their juvenilia, especially Dante Gabriel. J. B. Bullen observes the predominant motif of chivalry in the eldest Rossetti brother's earliest juvenilia: '[a]s a child the shapes that rose in him came from the historical past in an all-male world of knights, boats, and battles, which were mixed with scenes from Shakespeare.'[31] His images of persecution are exceptionally similar to those in Christina's poetry during the 1840s, completed while Christina remained at home with her then-ailing father.[32] However, where Dante Gabriel was fascinated with sword-fights and fictional rebellions, Christina's poetry focused on historical conflicts and the bystanders of war. For instance, when she was thirteen-years-old Christina composed the poem 'Forget Me Not (1844)', which depicts a lover left behind by a solider:

> 'Forget me not, forget me not!'
> The maiden once did say,
> When to some far-off battlefield
> Her lover sped away[33]

Where Dante Gabriel empathised with exiles and sacrificed soldiers, Christina invoked pathos for the innocent people caught up in war. Both were, however, enraptured by tales of expatriation and redefining political identity. Their father never ceased to classify himself as 'Italian', in spite of his excommunication, and his feelings of injustice are echoed in his

[30] Gabriele Rossetti quoted in Gabrielle Festing, *John Hookham Frere and His Friends* (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1899), p.304.
[31] J.B. Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2011), p.18.
[32] As previously mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, Gabriele began to lose his eyesight, which grew gradually worse throughout the 1840s. Christina's role as Gabriele's nursemaid will be explored later in this chapter.
[33] Christina Rossetti, 'Forget Me Not (1844)' in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p.83, ll.1-4.

children's works. Another discernible influence of Gabriele in these works is the heavily romantic tone. The knights are quixotic and their 'maidens' are idealistic, befitting of the gallant public image Gabriele constructed for himself in England. Although, very little textual analysis of the Rossetti children's imaginings of exile and war has been conducted, these pseudo-political pieces of juvenilia show the extent of Gabriele's earliest influences.

The Brontë children's imaginings were equally inspired by the wars and rebellions their father studied and experienced. The "excitement" of such military scenes sparked what Christine Nelson describes as 'a frenzy of creative play'[34] in the children, which could be acted-out through a particular set of toy soldiers Patrick acquired for Branwell in 1829 after returning from a visit to Leeds. Patrick's gift marked what many biographers – including Charlotte herself – declare to be the root of the Brontë juvenilia:

> Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed and I snatched up one and exclaimed 'This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine!' […] Mine was the prettiest of the whole and perfect in every part. Emily's was a grave-looking fellow. We called him Gravey. Anne's was a queer little thing, very much like herself. He was called Waiting Boy. Branwell chose Bonaparte.[35]

These characters developed into the key players of two imaginary kingdoms: Angria and Gondal, with the Brontë siblings as the omniscient Genii. Thus, Patrick plays a key role in the beginning of the Brontë siblings' legacy. Gondal was the creation of Emily and Anne, who were far more preoccupied with the divided courtroom than the gruesome action of the battlefield. As Catherynne M. Valente fictionalises in *The Glass Town Game* (2017), the sisters 'liked stories of Kings and Queens and Princes and Princesses best […] the wooden

[34] Christine Nelson, *The Brontës: A Family Writes* (London: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2016), p.20.
[35] Charlotte Brontë, '*History of the Year* (1829) in *Tales of Glass Town*, *Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings*, Ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) (4-5), p.4.

army became a glittering court full of schemes and intrigue and whispers behind curtains.'[36] In contrast, the Angrian Genii, Charlotte and Branwell, were enraptured in what Emma Butcher christens a 'military nucleus'.[37]

Branwell had already begun his play-apprenticeship with previous sets of toy soldiers and his *History of the Young Men* (1830) emphasising his role as the first Brontë to consider military writing. Separating himself temporarily from his co-authors, Branwell states that it was 'sometime in the summer of the year AD 1824'[38] that he was first inspired by a box of soldiers to begin story-telling. His first set of twelve soldiers – which Patrick had procured from Bradford – were soon joined by another similar set, which Branwell states he kept for about a year until they were 'either Maimed Lost burnt or destroyed by various casualties', implying that Branwell was already enthralled in the ruthlessness of the war narrative, and subjected his toys to the same fate as the characters they represented. Alexander argues that the Brontë sisters had largely dismissed their brother's 'military manoeuvers or invented lands'[39], until Charlotte had integrated the Duke of Wellington himself into the narrative. The Duke of Wellington, born Arthur Wellesley (1769-1852) was the resident hero of the Brontë Parsonage, which was overwhelmed with autobiographical accounts of the Napoleonic Wars in Patrick's library as well as the post-war memoirs within *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which were particularly prevalent throughout 1825, and Patrick had kept copies from this era.[40] Patrick had extolled the virtues of the glorified victor of the

[36] Catherynne M. Valente, *The Glass Town Game* (New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2017), p.11.
[37] Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', p.465.
[38] Branwell Brontë, 'Introduction to the *History of the Young Men*' (15th December 1830) in *The Brontës: A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997) (14-15), p.14.
[39] Christine Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self: Branwell Brontë's Microcosmic World', *Journal of Juvenilia Studies,* Vol.1 (2018) (3-19), p.9.
[40] For further details on how these memoirs within *Blackwood's Magazine* influenced the Angrian saga, please refer to Emma Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* Vol.22, No.4 (465-481), p.465.

Napoleonic Wars in his publication *The Maid of Killarney*[41] (1818), in which the male hero Albion discusses politics and war with an acquaintance, Captain Loughlean: 'Hannibal was wily and persevering;' the Captain declares, 'Alexander was bold and rapid; Caesar was wise to combine, and swift to execute; but Wellington, as a general, is wily, persevering, bold and rapid' (147). The proud soldier continues to assert the heroism of the General:

> Of our great Duke, and of him alone, perhaps, it can justly be said, there is a General who never conquered by chance, whose every victory is the natural and obvious result of power combination, and noble execution. (147)

Naturally, talk turns to discuss these Irishmen's pride that the celebrated Duke was born in Dublin: 'Ireland is certainly happy in giving birth to such a hero, and England is highly honoured for her discernment and liberality, in seeing his worth, and vesting him with so much power.' (147) Patrick is expressing pleasure in the fact he is of the same nationality of England's most illustrious hero through these characters, and we can see how Patrick's enthusiasm for this figure permeated through the household. In 1829, thirteen-year-old Charlotte recalls how the entire family feverishly awaited the news of the Duke's role in the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, which pervaded almost every newspaper and journal of the time: 'Nobody could think speak or write on anything but the catholic question and the Duke of Wellington […] I remember the day when the Intelligence extraordinary came with Mrs Peels speech'.[42] Charlotte recollects 'with what eagerness papa tore off the cover & how we all gathered round him & with what breathless anxiety we listend [sic.].'[43] We see from Charlotte's memory not only how Patrick had passed on his passion for Wellington's tales of valour, but also how he did not discriminate between his son and daughters when it came to political education. Charlotte states that the entire family

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[41] Patrick Brontë, *The Maid of Killarney* (1818) in *Brontëana: The Rev. Patrick Brontë, A.B., His Collected Works and Life,* Ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Bingley: T. Harrison & Sons, 1898), pp.131-199. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[42] Charlotte Brontë, *Tales of the Islanders* (1829) *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.1. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), p.76.

[43] Ibid.

gathered to hear the news, thereby inspiring discussion amongst the men and women of the Parsonage.

Comprehension of cultural affairs was not consigned to the male gender. Hence, when Branwell appeared in his sisters' bedroom with the box of soldiers, Charlotte displayed a precocious officiousness in assuming one of wooden soldiers: 'I jumped out of bed and I snatched up one and exclaimed "This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine!" […] Mine was the prettiest of the whole and perfect in every part.[44] Intriguingly, Charlotte uses the frequently feminine descriptor of 'pretty' while claiming a supposedly masculine toy. This concept of a materialistic gift inverting gender expectations is one Emily parallels in *Wuthering Heights.* As Mr Earnshaw sets off on a journey to Liverpool, he asks his children Hindley and Catherine what gifts he should return with: 'Hindley named a fiddle, and then he asked Miss Cathy […] she chose a whip'.[45] Eldest son Branwell, although being the owner of the toy soldiers, is the last sibling to assert his individuality in his choice of hero, Bonaparte. Perhaps in selecting the "nemesis" of the Duke of Wellington, Branwell is asserting his preparation to combat Charlotte for supremacy of play. Charlotte, in turn, would defend her own vision by assuming the tone of her male soldier characters. Robin St. John Conover maintains that '[w]riting as a male entitled her to an equal voice with that of Branwell, and had the added benefit of permitting her a privileged view into the workings of the male mind.[46] While adopting the voice of the male soldier allowed Charlotte to explore the psychology of battlefield narratives, this inverted tone had the added benefit of allowing her to emulate a scholar of war studies, her father, Patrick. Ellen Nussey recalls how her friend Charlotte's father would 'delight' in the study of war strategy, and the Brontë childhood was

[44] Charlotte Brontë, 'History of the Year (1829) in *Tales of Glass Town* (4-5), p.4.
[45] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* in *Wuthering Heights & Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), p.22. For further reading of how these gifts depict the desire for female empowerment, please refer to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p.264.
[46] Robin St. John Conover, 'Creating Angria: Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Collaboration', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol.24, No.1 (1999) (16-32), p.25.

full of 'the perusal of battle-scenes, and […] the artifice of war'.[47] Although all four of the Brontë siblings did maintain a sense of collaboration – even when Emily and Anne established their own Gondalian kingdom – the siblings did include each other's 'Genii' characters within the narrative. These Genii were fictional extension of the siblings', often depicted in giant-form, the Brontë children transform themselves into deific figures within the saga who control the mortal characters, as Alexander summarises: 'the four Brontë children (Talli, Brannii, Emmii and Annii, variously spelt) as supernatural guardians and players in the Glass Town and Angrian saga […] four protectors'[48]. However, where Charlotte's Talli would frequently attempt to protect her beloved characters, Brannii would push the characters to their physical and mental limits. Although as Branwell's writing eventually matured to contemplate how a soldier struggles to adjust to life post-war[49], in his earliest writings Branwell is far more fascinated with the ever-increasing casualties. Through the Angrian writings, Charlotte and Branwell could also combat for Patrick's approval – although Charlotte's championing of Wellington tilted Patrick's support in her favour, as Patrick himself recollects:

> my daughter Charlotte's hero, was sure to come off the conquering hero – a dispute would not infrequently arise […] When the argument got warm, as their mother was dead, I had sometimes to come in as arbitrator, and settle the dispute, according to the best of my judgement.'[50]

Although Charlotte and Branwell's artistic differences, fanned by their desire for Patrick's praise, did lead to sibling and "professional rivalry"; their alternative creative methodologies also resulted in an intricate saga. As Butcher observes: '[w]hile Branwell composed a linear chronicle of battlefield experience, Charlotte concentrated on specific moments of her and her brother's saga, expanding on her characters' – especially male characters' – memorable,

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[47] Green, *Father of Genius*, p.134.
[48] Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glass Town*, p.606.
[49] As will be explored throughout this thesis.
[50] Patrick Brontë correspondence to Elizabeth Gaskell, 14th July 1855 as cited in *Father of Genius*, p.128.

complex personalities within a domestic setting.[51] It was a collaboration that would last eleven years. In sharing tales of English mentality through the Napoleonic War, Irish pride and rebellion, and gender-indifferent political discussion – and, of course, purchasing the famous toy soldiers – Patrick paved the inspiration for his eldest children's literary apprenticeship, which would come to shape their later careers.

Where Patrick was exposed to conflict at home and his new life in England, Gabriele was directly involved in revolution. Although it resulted in his excommunication from Italy, he would feed his status as both immigrant and political exile, believing his "otherness" only served to increase his Romantic reputation. Upon arriving in London, he found a society still reeling from the celebrity culture sparked by the Romantics, particularly Lord Byron. Consequently, Dinah Roe states, exiles such as Gabriele were 'smart enough to market themselves as Romantic exiles in the Byronic vein, and found themselves welcome adornments to both town apartments and country houses.'[52] Gabriele, to Romantic admirers, was Byron's Child Harolde incarnate, embodying his most alluring qualities, which Tom Mole determines: an exile; his unaltered love of his homeland; and his 'urbane cynicism.'[53] His poetry during this period fed the public imagination, questioning monarchy and the establishment. Gabriele's poem 'Inni e Cantici', for instance, details the circumstances leading to his exile and declares his punishment unjust:

> that explosion of anonymous print
>
> […] showed me like a Devil to the king
>
> A shameless slander! Yet my enemy
>
> Mouths it against me, the King believes.'[54]

[51] Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', p.465.
[52] Ibid, p.4.
[53] Tom Mole, *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.103-104
[54] Gabriele Rossetti, *Gabriele Rossetti: A Versified Autobiography*, Ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Sands and Co., 1901), p.79.

Gabriele is perpetuating the perception of him as a quixotic poet, misunderstood by a disconnected despot. His interruption 'no fable this' is a creative device to incite a sense of prejudice in his comparably sheltered English reader. He increases their pathos by detailing the "adventures" of his subsequent escape, nomadic as Childe Harolde. Note also how Gabriele does not refer to King Ferdinand as 'my' king but 'the' king, disassociating the monarch from his beloved homeland. King Ferdinand, Gabriele argues, is not a representative of his motherland. He shared his patriotic poetry amongst his new English audience to demonstrate the true beauty of Italy and his country's place in his identity:

> I know my fame will have but scanty flight,
>
> Reads to whom I speak of Italy.
>
> Yet, if any of you there rose a wish
>
> To know me who I am, I'll meet it here.[55]

Fortunately, as Dinah Roe explains, Gabriele found his way to London where the 'extroverted personality that had made him one of Italy's most successful poetic *improvisatores* served him equally well'.[56] Gabriele's work in Italy had made him a mysterious and alluring artist amongst the upper-class English, and secured him a network of fellow-exiles in the capital. It was these interactions and the reputation he quickly generated – or so Gabriele told his children – that allowed him to 'secure' their mother.

The marriage of Frances Polidori and Gabriele Rossetti was the equivalent of a celebrity-wedding amongst Italian and Romantic circles. Gabriele's letters to his wife only served to increase his children's inherent respect for their mother, as he believed himself in 'possession' of a 'rare woman' and expresses this directly at his children in his autobiography: 'you, beloved children, thank you me | That such a mother I chose to give you breath'.[57] This

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[55] Gabriele Rossetti, *Versified Autobiography,* MS., p.8.
[56] Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland: A Victorian Family* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011), p.1.
[57] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.81.

concept of Frances having been deliberately "selected" by Gabriele is conceivable when we consider the literary prestige her family brought to the marriage. Frances's maiden name carried a reputation for creativity; she was the daughter of Gaetano Polidori, another Italian writer and expatriate. In his youth, Gaetano had been the secretary to the founder of Italian tragic drama, Count Vittorio Alfieri, until, as William Michael relates: 'on a single occasion his secretary was not at home when summoned, and the Count wrote him a note, asking him "to change his style, or else his dwelling."'[58] Nevertheless, his role as Alfieri's secretary did place Gaetano in Paris in the summer of 1789, making him a witness to the Storming of the Bastille: "I was passing by the Palais Royal,' he recalls, 'while the populace were running to assault the fortress; […] [I] had the sword handed over to me'. Gaetano, not wishing to be caught up in revolutionary violence, 'at once cast about for some way to get rid' of the sword and eventually 'stuck it into the hand of the first unarmed person I met; and, repeating, "*Prenez, citoyen, combattez pour la patrie*"'[59], meaning "take, citizen, fight for the homeland". This was not the sole connection the Polidoris maintained to anarchist Europe or literary celebrity. Frances was also, Andrew McConnell Stott asserts, the 'favourite sister'[60] to author of *The Vampyre*, and physician to Lord Byron himself, John Polidori. The creation of *The Vampyre,* frequently misattributed to Byron himself, was momentous in the Gothic imagination, but it was the Byron connection which particularly appealed to the exiled Gabriele. Byron, McConnell Stott explains, was 'in love with the idea of a free Italy'.[61] The ongoing battle of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies appealed to the Romantic, as he supplied funds to Gabriele's Carbonari, supporting what he called 'the very *poetry* of politics'.[62] Thus, the Polidori family, through their connection to the man who championed Gabriele and his comrades' cause, must have seemed too-good-to-be-true for the exiled orator. Newly

[58] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol. 1., p.26.
[59] Gaetano Polidori cited in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.25.
[60] Andrew McConnell Stott, *The Vampyre Family: Passion, Envy, and the Curse of Byron* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2013), p.38.
[61] Ibid., p.278.
[62] Byron cited in *The Vampyre Family,* p.278.

arrived in England, Gabriele met Frances and her family and swiftly, "stole" her from a fellow suitor. In his anthology of Dante Gabriel's letters William Michael recalls, in terms somewhat unusual for a son discussing his mother, a young Colonel from his mother's youth who 'fell not a little in love with Miss Polidori'. William Michael implies that he was often told of this particular gentleman who almost secured his mother's affections: 'Whether this highly estimable gentleman (as such he was always represented to me) would have made up his mind to "proposing for the governess" I am unable to say; but anyhow he was forestalled by the Neapolitan refugee.'[63] True to his dry sense of humour, William's memoir portrays his father in terms of a rakish pirate, the 'mythologised rulebreaker'[64], seducing his mother away from the honourable colonel. Gabriele profited from his Byronic poet reputation in public and in private, to the extent that he sought to include his children in the façade.

Figure 4. Ferdinando De Cristofaro (photographer), 'Monument to Gabriele Rossetti' (Vasto, 2011)

[63] William Michael Rossetti, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2*.,* p.20.
[64] Joetta Harty, 'Playing Pirate: Real and Imaginary Angrias in Branwell Bronte's Writing', pp.41-58 in *Pirates and Mutineers of the Nineteenth Century: Swashbucklers and Swindlers*, ed. Grace Moore (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), p.44.

Their home became a Bohemian sanctuary, which witnessed persistent visitations of excommunicated Italians. This enclave of expatriates subjected the Rossetti children to 'ultra-liberal and sometimes […] revolutionary'[65] political views; beyond those traditionally encountered by nineteenth-century children. They met with Italian writers and admirers of Gabriele's work. One of these many men was Giuseppe Mazzini, who composed Gabriele's obituary following his death in 1854 which described him as 'valued by the public […] an eminent poet and renowned scholar, was a fervent patriot, and a man of unsullied virtue, so that he was revered even by his political enemies'.[66] Mazzini elegised the loss of Gabriele's 'extemporaneous' talent as well as his progressive mind as '[t]he earliest, the most venerable, of the exiles'.[67] William Michael recalls being surrounded by Gabriele's admirers and growing up surrounded by anarchist language and feeling:

> At home, then, did my parents live, each fully occupied in affairs of literature or of the household; with the continuous addition […] of Italians coming in in a very informal way for chat and discussion, interspersed frequently by recitation of my father's verses, patriotic and other.[68]

William Michael's description raises an issue with analysing the extent of Gabriele's influence on his children; Gabriele was predominantly a spoken-word poet, consequently many of the poems which his children heard throughout their childhood are not recorded. Although this chapter will explore the anti-tyrannical sentiments expressed in Gabriele's published poems, and his autobiography, to determine the style of tales his children will have heard we can see portrayal of Gabriele's poems and stories in his children's artwork, particularly those of Dante Gabriel. The eldest Rossetti stated that amongst his most inspirational memories 'none is stronger than that of my father […] singing to us in his sweet, generous tones'.[69] The

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[65] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, pp.12-13.
[66] Giuseppe Mazzini cited in *Gabriele Rossetti: A Versified Autobiography*, pp.109-110.
[67] Ibid.
[68] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.12.
[69] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, cited in Bullen, *Painter and Poet,* p.18.

patriotic verses would inspire the young Dante Gabriel's earliest imaginings as 'the music and the fire and my heart burned together, and I would take paper and pencil, and try in some childish way to fix the shapes that rose within me.'[70] These 'shapes' transformed into some of his earliest sketches, including 'Two Armed Knights' [Fig.5.], their chivalric scenes personifying how Dante Gabriel interpreted Gabriele and his fellow Italian's 'animated talk on the affairs of Europe' and 'patriotic aspiration'.[71]

These imagined tableaus of sword-fights and conflicting knights also bear exceptional resemblance to another pastime of the Rossetti children – which twinned perfectly with Gabriele's tales – their childhood fascination with Theatrical Prints, specifically those completed by the Skelt Company. [Fig.6.] These collectable sheets contained colourful prints or engravings of characters and scenes from famous plays and pantomimes of the time. They would be sold by stationers and accumulated by children fascinated with the stories they portrayed. Deborah Phillips reflects on the popularity of these theatre souvenirs: '[t]hose who did not attend the theatre would be exposed to the sets and costumes of successful London West End productions through prints […] [t]he first identified theatre sheets were published and registered in 1811, with characters for the pantomime *Mother Goose.'*[72] Such was the demand for these toy theatre sets that one company owned by William West 'was making 10,000 copies of a single print' by 1815.[73] It is not surprising that the Rossettis with the excess of storytelling in their childhood were drawn to these images, which often depicted scenes of the hero confronting the tyrannical villain – almost like caricatures of Gabriele's tales. So significant were these images that in 1863 Dante Gabriel drafted a public appeal – we presume in order to be printed in a newspaper – asking if anyone could 'give

[70] Ibid.
[71] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters, with a Memoir*, Vol.1., p.54.
[72] Deborah Philips, *Fairground Attraction: A Genealogy of the Pleasure Ground* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p.48.
[73] Ibid.

their names or indeed any information respecting this quaint bypath of ~~very ? popular~~[74] art, which must be remembered by many with some affection as a childish pleasure?'[75] The now successful Pre-Raphaelite informs his potential readers that these sheets once appealed to 'aspiring youths'.[76] He does not specify what he was 'aspiring' towards, but the insinuation is that these scenes appealed to him as a young artist. In William Michael's *Memoir* of his brother, he directly ties the pastime to Dante Gabriel's early decision that he 'meant to be a painter.' He reminisces about how he and Dante Gabriel rarely used these prints in the manner intended:

> The quantity of these figures which Dante and I coloured is marvellous to reflect upon […] we made some attempt at acting a play with such personages on a toy-stage; but, as none of us had the least manual or mechanical dexterity, this came to nothing.'[77]

Instead, as this chapter will argue, these figures became a conduit through which the children, particularly Dante Gabriel, could re-enact their father's stories. Just as the Brontës utilised their toy soldiers to comprehend the complexity of the Napoleonic War, as taught to them by their father, the Rossettis used these paper knights to animate and process the circumstances leading to their father's exile and, more significantly, his poetic "self".

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[74] Dante Gabriel's original draft omits 'very popular'. He does not specify why he wishes to know more about how these sheets were produced for any reason other than nostalgia.

[75] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Theatrical Prints Draft', (1863) MS. Princeton University. Transcript accessed via *The Rossetti Archive.* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/3p-1863.prinms.rad.html?fbclid=IwAR3D34gd80MzQJ40Fc85EqYn_fzXvJlmhFC642EitelHtrD4jwpcVFWm508> [accessed 18th December 2017]

[76] Ibid.

[77] William Michael Rossestti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.43.

Figure 5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Two Armed Knights' (Private Collection, c.1835-36)
Figure 6. Unknown Artist, 'Toy Theatre Prints (previously owned by the Rossettis)' (Private Collection, c.1780-1860)

Where Dante Gabriel would celebrate the influence of his father's spoken tales and the Skelt characters upon his early art, Charlotte Brontë equally understood the impact of her brother's wooden soldiers upon her literary apprenticeship. In *Jane Eyre* (1847), Charlotte parallels the empowering nature of play. The eponymous Jane's rare pastimes mimic that of her author's as, when we meet Jane as a young girl, she describes herself devouring Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds*[78] and describes herself as sitting 'cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.'[79] She assimilates herself within the tropical scene of the book, comparing herself to 'a Turk'. This image is an echo to the Brontës' playing with another set of toys owned by Branwell, a wooden band of 'Turkish musicians.' Recalling the figurines, Branwell recollects that he kept the musicians until the summer of 1825 when 'Charlotte and Emily returned from school where they had been during the days of my former sets. I remained for 10 months after they

[78] Patrick kept this book in his library, as explained in Barker, *The Brontës,* p.150.
[79] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1847), p.4

had returned without any soldiers'[80], until 1826 when the famous Napoleonic Twelve were purchased. The fact that Branwell had already connected his sisters with how these toys remain in his possession demonstrates how little the Brontës adhered to gender stereotypes when it came to play. Branwell is insinuating that Charlotte and Emily equally claimed some of these Turkish musicians - or, possibly, that Branwell had gifted them – hence why he remained without the figures until 1826. Equally, Jane Eyre is empowered through her limited playthings. Shortly after confronting her abusive cousin John Reed after he beats her with the book she had been reading, Jane is reassured by the presence of a wooden toy: 'it puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doted on this wooden toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation. I could not sleep unless it was folded in my night-gown.'[81] Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson argue the possibility that Charlotte is subconsciously 'thinking of her own childhood and the wooden toy soldiers which played such an important role in the young Brontës' imaginative lives.'[82] Her author's memories of her childhood bolster Jane's independence and confidence, with the recollection of the 'Turkish musicians' Jane can physically defend herself against her cousin, and with "support" of the wooden toy Jane soon after defends her character against her Aunt Reed's accusations before the domineering clergyman, Mr. Brocklehurst.

Charlotte associates play with giving oneself a voice, just as she used her brother's soldiers as a mouthpiece for fictional male characters. Through these men, Charlotte declared herself Branwell's creative equal, as Conover maintains:

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[80] Branwell Brontë, 'Introduction to the *History of the Young Men*' (15th December 1830) in *Life in Letters,* (14-15), p.14.

[81] *Jane Eyre*, p.26.
In the first edition of *Jane Eyre* Charlotte describes the doll as her 'wooden toy', however in the second and third editions 'wooden' is changed to 'little'. For further information, please refer to Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson's, *Celebrating Charlotte Brontë: Transforming Life into Literature in* Jane Eyre (Norwich: Swallowtail Print Ltd., 2016), p.23.

[82] Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson, *Celebrating Charlotte Brontë: Transforming Life into Literature in* Jane Eyre (Norwich: Swallowtail Print Ltd., 2016), p.23.

> The parity in the writing relationship between brother and sister was facilitated, in part, by this appropriation of the patriarchal voice by Charlotte. Her purpose in adopting a male pseudonym, a habit which remained with her for the rest of her writing life, may have been a conscious effort to hold her own with her brother in this apprenticeship, as well as in this paternalistic Angrian world.[83]

To accomplish an equal voice with her brother, Charlotte was determined to complete her first Angrian tale, titled 'The Twelve Adventurers'[84] and pre-empt, Alexander maintains, 'her brother's usual leadership role'.[85] In her urgency to make her authorial intentions known Charlotte uses her own, as well as her father's, fascination for war-strategy, travel and the Duke of Wellington as foundations around which she can construct a piece of the Angrian narrative. To increase her authority in the stories, Charlotte emphasises her omnipotent Genii role. Charlotte structures the tale in the past tense, her tone insinuating this account is being written in analepsis by one of the adventurers. However, the author is not listed as one of the many fictional chroniclers of Angrian history that she and Branwell would attribute their work to – Sir John Bud, Sergeant Tree, and Captain Flowers, for instance – but Charlotte Brontë herself. Thus she is emphasising the omnipotent role of her Genii character, named Talli, simultaneously observing and experiencing the action. 'The Twelve Adventurers' gains its title from the twelve toy soldiers who struggle to journey on tempestuous seas to West Africa.[86] They first port in Spain, and then Trinidad until they discover the coast of Guinea. The local Ashantee tribes seek to protect their homeland from these "invaders" and battle inevitably ensues. Robert G. Collins notes that the topology of Charlotte and Branwell's mythopoeia **'**turns Angria into England, Africa into the contesting

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[83] Conover, 'Creating Angria: Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Collaboration', p.25.

[84] Charlotte Brontë, 'The Twelve Adventurers' (1829) in *Tales of Glasstown,* pp.5-15. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[85] Christine Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self: Branwell Brontë's Microcosmic World', *Journal of Juvenilia Studies,* Vol.1 (2018) (3-19), p.9.

[86] For further reading into the use of shipwrecks and storms as metaphors in the Brontë juvenilia, please refer back to Chapter One of this thesis.

powers of Europe'[87], consequently the Twelve Adventurers are mimicking the journey of the English army into the European nations during the Napoleonic War. The Twelve are determined to explore and conquer, emphasising the hyper-masculine process of colonisation. Nonetheless, as the men are caught up in the middle of the storm, their sense of adventure begins to decrease: 'everyone looked as sheepish as possible and noway [sic.] inclined to meet our fate like men.' (6) Although the Twelve are determined to maintain an image of strong masculinity, the author acknowledges that '[s]ome of us began to cry' (6) when faced with the possibility that they may not survive the voyage. The intensity with which Charlotte describes soldiers lost in a storm is reminiscent of one of Patrick's poems: 'The Tempest', which is included as a song in his *Maid of Killarney*.[88] The lyrics describe '[b]lack clouds the angry skies o'ercast | The forked lightnings glance!' (ll.1-2), equally the Twelve are 'silenced by a fierce flash of lightning and a loud peal of thunder.' (7) Patrick's storm causes sailors to abandon ship and 'man the life-boat!' (l.21): 'One minute more and all is lost! | Wide on the ruthless billows tossed' (ll.23-24), which is paralleled as the Twelve's ship 'creaks' in the storm until '[a]nother flash of lightning, bright and more terrible than the first, split our mainmast and carried away our foretop-sail.' (7) Although Patrick's poem does not explicitly explain these men are soldiers or in the navy, 'The Tempest' does utilise the shipwreck as a metaphor for the chaos of political rebellion. *The Maid of Killarney,* as previously observed, contemplates the heroism of Wellington and the Napoleonic Wars, and Patrick contemplates the collateral damage of such conflicts through pastoral metaphors befitting the Irish backdrop. He describes how a multitude of animals seek shelter from the storm: the 'lowing cattle seek the shade' (l.7); the 'timid dove darts through the glade' (l.9); and the 'eagle seeks his rock' (l.10). Each creature represents the bystanders of conflict and those struggling under political tyranny. The song continues to pray that '[m]ay all oppress'd

[87] Robert G. Collins, *The Hand of the Arch-Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993),p.xiv.
[88] Patrick Brontë, *The Maid of Killarney*, pp.153-54. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

with equal fear | With equal ease, find shelter near!' (ll.11-12), each character who hears this song recognises the concealed meaning as Captain Loughlean and protagonist Albion continue to discuss the effect of xenophobia on war. The discussion of war resumes, in spite of the song's warning. Equally, once they land on the coast of Guinea, Charlotte's Twelve recover and 'immediately' prepare to battle with the natives 'having each of us a pistol, sword and bayonet.' (7) This rare demonstration of exposure demonstrates Charlotte's rejection of the straightforward violence of Branwell.

Charlotte did not believe in allowing her characters to suffer without reward, or to create men devoid of vulnerability, a fact she makes clear in 'The Twelve Adventurers' when her Genii Talli usurps her counterpart, Brannii. When the Twelve explore the Guinea coast, they meet the deity that caused the almost fatal storm: 'On his forehead was written "The Genius of the Storm". On he strode over the black clouds which rolled beneath his feet and regardless of the fierce lightning which flashed around him.' (9) This giant is Branni and by declaring her brother the storm-brewer, Charlotte is personifying the violence of his fiction and stating he is the Genii responsible for much of the characters' sufferings. Fortunately, the Twelve are rescued from his despotic "play" by Talli who descends to the earth just as Branni makes 'three circles in the air with his flaming scimitar, then lifted his hand to strike.' (9) Before he can harm the soldiers, Talli orders '"Genius, I command thee to forbear!"' (9) and protects the men from her co-creator. By interjecting the expected story-arc, Charlotte is stating her intention to make the Angrian narrative more intricate and less violent. She also accentuates her Genii influence by interjecting her and her father's favourite hero, The Duke of Wellington. Thus far in the story, the Duke is only known amongst the rest of the Twelve as 'Arthur Wellesley' – the Duke's birth name – but upon entering the court of the Genii, he is given his full title. As the Twelve are led into a 'hall of sapphire' with 'thrones of gold' (11) they see all four of the Genii. Upon seeing the men, the chiefs 'sprang up' from their thrones (11), just as Emily and Charlotte once 'jumped' out of their bed when Branwell

entered with the toys. One Genii, who we can interpret as Talli, upon seeing Arthur proclaims 'This is the Duke of the Wellington!' (11), just as Charlotte 'snatched' her soldier and exclaimed 'This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine!'[89] By reimagining the scene with the toy soldiers, Charlotte is once more announcing herself an equal of Branwell. She too was raised by Patrick to be fascinated by strategy and the mentality of the soldier, and she would not allow her brother to assume her less capable of portraying heroism.

The model of the hero was of equal fascination to the Rossetti children as Gabriele and his brotherhood of fellow Italians engaged in, as William Michael reminisces: 'animated talk on the affairs of Europe, from the point of view of patriotic aspiration, and hope long deferred till it became almost hopeless.'[90] These men believed in the power of language and patriotism to improve their country, and believed anarchists were only driven to destruction when they had nothing else to lose. The authority of art Gabriele extolled naturally appealed to the young writers of his family, and Dante Gabriel's first and only drama *The Slave*[91] analyses the politically-charged subjects discussed in his living-room, including: the usurpation of an autocrat, the struggles of the lower-classes and unnecessary violence. Completed in 1835, when its creator was only six-years-old, *The Slave* depicts the eponymous serf rebelling against his master, known only as "Traitor". Self-conscious of his younger self's inelegant writings, William Michael explains that Dante Gabriel had kept his original manuscript hidden from view – even having previously torn the seventh and eighth pages from the manuscript – until he rediscovered his brother's 'first drama' in 1895.[92] When perusing his brother's draft, William Michael appears bemused by the absence of plot in lieu

[89] Charlotte Brontë, '*History of the Year* (1829)' in *Tales of Glasstown* (4-5), p.4.
[90] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.54.
[91] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Slave' (1835), (Original MS. in the library the South African National Gallery) Transcript accessed via *The Rossetti Archive*, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1835.raw.html> [accessed 14 November 2015], p.4. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[92] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters*, Vol.1., p.65.

of 'constant abjuration and fighting.'[93] The drama commences immediately with a duel, as Traitor demands his slave to pass him his sword, solely for the purpose of murdering him:

> Tr. Ho Slave give me my sword!
>
> *Enter Slave.*
>
> Sl. Here is your sword.
>
> Tr. Slave, villain thou shalt die! (4)

The *in medias res* structure is to be expected of a boy impatient to reach the action of the play. The duel ends in bloodshed, although the violence occurs off-stage in Shakespearean fashion, we see the Slave '[r]e-enter […] with a bloody sword', declaring 'I have wounded him!' (5) Unfortunately, Traitor is merely injured and proceeds to challenge the Slave throughout the play, often with support in the form of a Spanish Lord named Don Manuel, various guards and messengers, and an English knight named 'Mortimer'. The presence of Mortimer implies that *The Slave* was twinned with Dante Gabriel's aforementioned 1835-36 sketch 'Two Armed Knights' [Fig.5.], although the composition of the characters is highly similar to that of Skelt's character plates owned by the Rossetti brothers, Dante Gabriel does include a footnote beneath his sketch naming one of the figures 'Edmund Mortimer'. Both Dante Gabriele and Skelt's *mise en scènes* depict two men on the brink of a duel, with Rossetti's sketch featuring Mortimer and his unnamed assailant dressed in heavy armour, emphasising the heavy conflict of the story. It is conceivable, therefore, that the English Knight sketch was intended as a companion piece for *The Slave* – an exceptionally early pre-cursor to Dante Gabriel's later career as painter and poet.[94]

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[93] Ibid., p.66.

[94] As will be explored throughout Chapters Four and Five of this thesis, Dante Gabriel consistently wrote a poem to accompany his verse, or vice versa, such as his painting 'Proserpine' (c.1874) and its poem of the same name, and most famously his 'Blessed Damozel' poem (c.1847-70) and its paired poem (c.1871-81) – select stanzas of which are engraved on its frame. Thus, at six-years-old, Dante Gabriel was predicting his signature artist technique as well as contemplating the politics of his father and his Italian 'brothers'.

The Slave's *Dramatis Personæ* is comprised entirely of male figures, an observation which William Michael found equally noteworthy: 'It will be observed that there is no "female interest" in *The Slave*; and in fact the "gushing or ecstatic female" was, to all us infants, a personage less provocative of sentiment than of mirth.'[95] This "gushing" figure would resurface a few years later in Dante Gabriel's juvenilia in his 'Roderick and Rosalba (1840)', a highly redacted manuscript whose original title was changed in 1843 to 'The Free Companions, a Tale of the Days of King Stephen'.[96] This chivalric romance is set following the civil war known as 'The Anarchy' (1135-1154). William Michael summarises the tales' synopsis as a story of 'how a lady was captured by a "marauder" who wanted to wed her perforce, and how she was rescued by her affianced knight.'[97] Romantic gender stereotypes are reinforced in this piece as the devout Rosalba is kidnapped whilst on pilgrimage and, upon her rescue from her seemingly unescapable wedding, can only watch 'the progress of the combat (as the reader may readily suppose) with breathless interest' from her tower.[98] Once Roderick succeeds, she rushes 'enraptured (as ladies always do in romances) into the arms of her victorious lover.'[99] Dante Gabriel's parentheses emphasises Rosalba's role, not as a character, but as a plot device through which the men can prove their heroism. Alternatively, *The Slave* is entirely devoid of female characters as the six-year-old author was exploring hyper-masculinity of chivalric romances. The valour of the characters is judged by how quickly they are provoked to violence and how they interact with the personification of the subjugated classes, the Slave himself.

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[95] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.66.

[96] As explained by William Michael Rossetti, c.1905: Dante Gabriel 'afterwards (must have been towards 1843) changed the title […] and made the alterations freely marked in the MS.' Transcript accessed via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1840.dukems.radheader.html> (2nd January 2017), p.12.

[97] Ibid., pp.83-84.

[98] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Roderick and Rosalba' (1840) (Manuscript in Duke University Library). Transcript accessed via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1840.dukems.radheader.html> [accessed 2nd January 2017], p.11.

[99] Ibid.

William Michael acknowledges the influence of Gabriele in the precision with which his then-six-year-old brother attempts to write: 'It surprises me to note that the spelling is strictly correct: the blank verse (when it occurs, for some parts are in truncated verse, or practical prose) is also correct enough'.[100] The confidence with which his brother writes is of no surprise to William Michael, who informs the readers that he cannot 'with reference to any one of us four, remember any time when, knowing what a verse was, we did not also know and feel what a *correct* verse was', he accounts their early exposure to how poems and dramas should be written by the 'early reading of really good poetry' as well as 'the constant hearing of our father's verses recited with perfect articulation and emphasis'.[101] These tales then initiated poetic and philosophical responses in the visiting Italians, and thus the literary cycle continued. The collaborative atmosphere must have appealed to the opinionated Rossetti children and Dante Gabriel mimics this sense of reactionary males in *The Slave.* Traitor having been wounded following his confrontation with the titular Slave, the Spanish Lord Don Manuel arrives immediately declaring '[v]illains com [sic.] out to battle ho I say!' (6) Two of his soldiers follow, prepared for battle, when Traitor suddenly appears on the scene crying 'fight cowards fight! […] draw draw!' Each man then exits drawing their swords (6). The rapidity of the scene makes the action difficult to follow, however William Michael explains that this scene demonstrates how Don Manuel is 'entitled to the allegiance of Traitor, who has deserted him, and sides with Mortimer'.[102] Hence, in the midst of Traitor's ongoing battle with Slave, Don Manuel and his two soldiers follow, only for Don Manuel to become a turncoat. When Traitor confronts Slave once more, but before they can fight, Don Manuel challenges Traitor:

> Ma. On soldiers here's the Traitor! So fight fight!
>
> Tr. down Soldier!
>
> Ma. Coward!

[100] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters*, Vol.1., p.65.
[101] Ibid, pp.65-66.
[102] Ibid, p.66.

Exeunt fighting (9)

Observe that Don Manuel did not immediately battle Traitor upon his arrival; therefore it is conceivable that Traitor deceived Don Manuel and declared – or was discovered – to side with Mortimer in the manuscript's missing pages. The pages abound with constantly changing allegiances; the Slave himself is even declared a traitor by Don Manuel. Slave and Don Manuel should have a common enemy in Traitor, and should accordingly find a comradeship in each other. Don Manuel even declares: 'on slave to battle' (11), implying that they are intending to confront Traitor together. However, Slave enters and simply cries: 'down Manuel!', which enrages the Spanish Lord:

Man. Coward Slave and villain!

Sl. I dare thee on die Coward!

Man. Traitor thou diest! *draws.*

Sl. Coward! *draws.* beware! (11)

Slave does not initially threaten Don Manuel as Traitor does, he simply tells him to put 'down' his sword. It is conceivable the slave is attempting to overthrow the lord – if we recall, we do not know what sin Slave committed to cause Traitor to turn against him, therefore it is possible he was attempting to fight his way out of his low status – however, it is far more likely that he is requesting Don Manuel to retreat from the fight. Throughout the drama, Slave is the only character to not immediately seek vengeance through violence, only ever drawing his sword in self-defence. His reluctance to duel would explain why Don Manuel is so quick to dub him a 'coward'. Consequently, Slave can be interpreted as a personification of Gabriele's politics as he too believed that violence should be the last resort. Regrettably for Slave, the warmongering Don Manuel does not rest until he dies at the end of the narrative: 'Enter Manuel and Slave fighting. Slave is slain and exit Manuel. The End.' (14) Although not violent unless necessary, the Slave is persecuted by the upper classes who interpret his non-confrontational actions as slights upon their honour. The paranoia and quick-tempers of these nobles seem hyperbolic depictions of King Ferdinand's

misinterpretation of Gabriele's verse. He empathised with the injustice Gabriele and his countrymen felt and thus ends the drama abruptly with the death of Slave – who does not play a direct role in the ongoing war of Traitor and Mortimer versus Don Manuel – to provoke pathos. Although not political himself, Slave is a victim of their confrontation, much as Gabriele was punished for his role in the Sicilian Rebellion. Objectively, through his role in the Carbonari, we can see Gabriele was mistrusted by the noblemen of his country, yet he knew how easily an innocent bystander could be a victim of oppression in the midst of rebellion and civil war. Roe describes how one story Gabriele told by the fireside stirred 'Republican indignation' in everyone who heard it, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge: 'the story of Gabriele's father Niccolo, a humble blacksmith, who in 1798 was beaten nearly to death by invading French Republican troops after he refused to shoe their horses.'[103] Gabriele would tell his children that he believed this French affront caused his father's death two years later, as William Michael states: 'I believe they gave him a smart beating for failing or neglecting to furnish required provisions; and, being unable to stomach this, or to resent it as he would have liked, his health declined, and soon he was no more.'[104] The injury to his body and pride caused Niccolo's end, according to Rossetti myth. The children must have been horrified by this story, and would have witnessed the rage it incited. They learned how stories could spark radical thoughts as well as empathy. Hence, although of a tender age and unpractised in writing, Dante Gabriel's *The Slave* aims to provoke a similar sense of discrimination and asks that those involved in battle to distinguish enemies from bystanders.

In the same year Niccolo Rossetti and his country were being assaulted by French troops, Patrick was witnessing rebellion on a much larger scale, the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Incited by the French Revolution, many people considered breaking English rule over Ireland. Insurgency seemed imminent, as William Hamilton Maxwell recalls '[t]he issue of the

[103] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* pp.5-6.
[104] William Michael Rossetti, Ed., *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.4.

American contest – the institution of the Irish Volunteers – the overthrow of the French monarchy – the victories of the republican armies abroad, and the spread of infidel and revolutionary doctrines'[105] all contributed to a restless atmosphere in the country and '[t]he temper of the times was unfriendly to concession – when the sword was drawn the scabbard was thrown away.'[106] Insurgence was not triggered, Green explains, until 'the government responded with a policy of repression.'[107] At the helm of the uprisings was the United Irishmen, whose manifesto morphed from patriotism to destruction. Philip Harwood argues that once the lower and working class Irish people 'combined their several grievances in one common mass of discontent and agitation, and joined their several forces in one phalanx of UNITED IRISHMEN […] under the action of the irritants unsparingly applied by an incendiary government, the whole together exploded in the Rebellion of 1798.'[108] The rising lasted through the spring and summer and involved 'between 30,000 and 50,000 insurgents and around 76,000 government troops' and cost approximately 30,000 lives.[109] Unfortunately, Patrick's own County Down was the main centre of this rebellion. Although there is no evidence of Patrick taking part in the insurrection, his then-nineteen-year-old brother William did and was, Green states, '[f]ortunate to escape with his life after the battle on Windmill Hill, Ballynahinch 12/13 June.'[110] The precarious fate of his brother and the chaos of his country instilled a 'constant horror of revolution' and civil war in Patrick. He believed in preventative action and preparing oneself for defence. The tireless stream of uprisings followed Patrick all the way to his sizarship in St. John's College, which Barker explains 'coincided with renewed fears of a French Invasion of England. Napoleon's Grand Army was drawn up across the Channel waiting for France to gain control of the sea.'[111] Fearing

[105] William Hamilton Maxwell, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798, with memoirs of the Union, and Emmett's insurrection in 1803* (London: Baily Brothers, 1845), p.12.
[106] Maxwell, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798*, p.1.
[107] Green, *Father of the Brontës,* p.25.
[108] Philip Harwood, *History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* (London: Chapman and Elcoate, 1844), p.52.
[109] John Cannon, Ed. *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.152.
[110] Green, *Father of Genius,* p.25.
[111] Barker, *The Brontës*, p.13.

incursion, the college of the university each created their own militia with the university authorities reluctantly granted permission 'for all lay members of the university to be allowed one hour a day for military drill.'[112] These university troupes were full of students preparing to fight for their country, including Patrick Brontë. He prided himself on having drilled in the volunteers corps under Lord Palmerston, who was appointed Minister of War in 1809 and would later become foreign secretary and prime minister. Although it seems unusual for a predominantly pacifist clergyman to enlist within a militia, Barker believes that the violence he witnessed living in the epicentre of the Irish Rebellion lead Patrick to favour preparation above aggression as the country 'continued in a state of constant alarms and invasion scares'.[113] Nevertheless, he never stopped stressing his aversion to civil war – which he would later dub 'the worst of all wars'[114] and rebellion. His fictional works echoed these anxieties, including his *Maid of Killarney.*

Figure 7. George Cruikshank, 'The King's drum shall never be beaten for Rebels' in William Hamilton Maxwell's, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798, with memoirs of the Union, and Emmett's insurrection in 1803* (London: Baily Brothers, 1845) (Insert)

[112] Barker, *The Brontës*, p.13.
[113] Ibid.*,* p.14.
[114] Patrick Brontë letter to Hugh Brontë*,* dated 20th November 1843 in Green, *Father of Genius,* p.25.

Although the male characters of this story celebrate the victories of Wellington, the true wisdom comes from his female protagonist, Flora, who when asked to give her opinion of their hero's successes responds: 'I would not wish to think of them at all.' (147) She does not negate the valour of Wellington, but much like her author she wishes such conflicts did not exist: '[h]appy would it be for the world, if it stood in no need of great Generals.' (147) With an authority not expected of this softly-spoken angel-of-the-house, Flora reminds her male companions to recognise that the "glories" of war bear a human-expense:

> My heart has often grieved, on reading of the blood that was spilt in war. If mankind, in compliance with the Saviour's golden rule, would do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, we should have universal peace, and a comparatively happy world. (147)

Her reiteration of the Biblical rule attests to Patrick's sentiments as a clergyman and it is not a surprise that she is the one who sings the aforementioned 'Tempest' song which reiterates the value of human life. Echoes of Flora's wisdom carry forward into Charlotte Brontë's *The Twelve Adventurers,* although Patrick's moral arguments may not appear to complement the military tone of the Angrian story; Charlotte reiterates the unnecessary costs of war and asks her male characters why their first instinct is to fight. The ethics contained within *The Maid of Killarney* were renewed into the Brontë children's imagination when Patrick was published in the *Leeds Mercury*. Barker describes how in 1828 Patrick was 'writing to the newspapers on another favourite subject of his: the severity of the criminal code.'[115] Patrick was debating the severity of punishments for various crimes, asking readers if a thief warrants the same fatal penalty as a murderer, and asking if one can morally hang a man for either offense: '[o]n the bench,' Patrick's letter to the *Leeds Mercury* reads, 'on the jury-box, on the snowy ermine, on the fatal platform, there is a bloody stain, which no fancied duty of submission to

[115] Barker, *The Brontës,* p.184.

the higher powers, can ever wash away.'[116] His arguments are an echo of those posed by the character Doctor O'Leary in *The Maid of Killarney*: 'An man will be hanged for stealing a fat sheep, though he be hungry; - he will incur no greater punishment for murdering twenty men! In the name of common sense, what is the necessary tendency of this?' (150) His letter to the *Leeds Mercury,* although written on 22nd December 1828, was not published till 10th January 1829. By April Charlotte had completed her *Two Romantic Tales*. The revival of Patrick's writing proved an incentive for his children to follow his literary example, and reiterate his scruples in the cases of mercy and war. In the *Twelve Adventurers,* much like the *Maid of Killarney*, the victory of Wellington is exalted, with Charlotte's Genii emphasising the 'renown of the victor' which 'shall reach to the ends of the earth. Kings and Emperors shall honour him, and Europe shall rejoice in its deliverer […] his name shall be everlasting!' (11) Nevertheless, the story insists that the true glory of Wellington is his ability to gauge when not to fight. Upon establishing their place on the Ashantee shores, the small army's fellow Englishmen arrive and join the Angrian colonization. Two soldiers named Marcus O'Donnell and Murray declare that a King should be nominated to reign fairly over the new nation, although they question whether it is best 'to follow His Grace the Duke of Wellington.' (14) O'Donnell heartily concurs with his decision stating 'I always thought, Duke, you would return to us with more glory than you had [when you] went away from us', to which Murray simply sneers 'indeed' (14). Before a fight can ensue, Wellington demands that Murray apologise 'handsomely' for his gall and, such is his authority, that Murray immediately expresses regret for his 'foolish insolence' (14). Their anger dispelled Wellington orders: 'Now shake hands and be friends. I hate civil war' (14), his voice foreshadowing Patrick's belief that civil war is the worst of all conflicts. It was an argument he reiterated throughout his career and one which resonates throughout the conflicts, not only of Angria, but Gondal.

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[116] Patrick Brontë, article in the *Leeds Mercury* (Jan 1829) cited in *The Letters of the Reverend Patrick Bronte*, Ed. Dudley Green (Brimscombe: Nonsuch Publishing, 2005), p.68.

Emily and Anne developed distaste for the bloody battles in which Charlotte and Branwell immersed themselves. They left 'the fate of their characters in Charlotte and Branwell's hands'[117] and instead followed their Gondalian narrative. These tales did contain accounts of civil wars and uprisings, the most brutal being Emily's 'Rosina (1841)' which details the murder of Emperor Julius Brenzaida and the overthrow of his castle:

> Brenzaida's crest *is* down
>
> Brenzaida's sun is set, Lady,
>
> His empire overthrown!
>
> […] I saw him fall, I saw the gore
>
> From his heart's fountain swell
>
> […] And mingling on the marble floor[118]

These downfalls are often contemplated by characters after the conflict, or from a further distance, to emphasise the largescale destruction and upheaval of human life beyond the battle. One poem which emphasises Patrick's belief that we should extend to our fellow man the mercy we wish to be shown, is Anne's 1845 poem 'Song': 'Come to the banquet – triumph in your songs! | Strike up the chords – and sing of Victory!' (ll.1-2)[119] The unnamed Gondal speaker – who appears to be the child of a General or a Prince of Gondal as they draw attention to 'my Father's wrongs' (l.18) – begins his verse strongly enough, welcoming the heroes to celebrate a recent battlefield triumph. His tone is one of revolution, declaring '[t]he Tyrants are o'erthrown; the Land is free!' (l.4). Although Anne does not elucidate in this piece who these 'tyrants' are, the facts of the storyline seem subsidiary to the narrator's increasing bitterness towards the supposed glories of war. His initial celebratory remarks are revealed to be sardonic as he cries: 'The Land is free! Aye shout it forth once more, | Is she

[117] Barker, *The Brontës*, p.225.
[118] Emily Brontë, 'Rosina' in *Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin, 1992) (134-137) ll.62-64; ll.69-70.
[119] Anne Brontë, 'Song (1845)' in *Tales of Glasstown,* pp.473-74. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

not red with her oppressors' gore?' (ll.5-6) The narrator sarcastically encourages his fellow soldiers to eat, drink and be merry, but simultaneously draws attention to the blood they have spilled in order to "achieve" this celebration. The most ominous line of the poem which foreshadows this shift in tone is the narrator's belief that '[t]he oppressed have risen to dress their wrongs' (l.3), while this is most likely referring to the rebels who have overthrown the aforementioned 'tyrants', this image of having been 'risen' carries a dual interpretation. While the anarchists rose-up to usurp their superiors, there is also an implication of the now-oppressed victims of the revolution to 'rise' from the dead in the mind of the narrator. He is haunted by the deaths deemed "necessary" by his fellow soldiers and announces: 'Shout you that will, and you that can rejoice | To revel in the riches of your foes.' (ll.13-14) The implication that only those 'that can rejoice' should celebrate simultaneously poses a moral question, asking the men if they can revel in murder, as well as drawing attention to those who cannot join in the festivities, namely their victims and any rebels lost in action.

The poem is constructed upon rhetorical questions which provokes readers and fellow characters to address their own conscience, such as: '[w]e are her champions – shall we not rejoice?' (l.7) and '[a]re not the tyrants' broad domains our own?' (l.8) The narrator is asking if the country is truly theirs because of a single mutiny, have they truly secured the freedom of future generations, '[i]s <u>this</u> [sic.] the end we struggled to obtain?' (l.35), or simply rejoicing '[i]n praise of deadly vengeance lift your voice' (l.15). The concept of being haunted by this experience is shown in the graphic imagery as the narrator asks how they can '[g]loat o'er your tyrants' blood, your victims' woes' (l.16) or how '[i]t may be pleasant, to recall the death, | Of those beneath whose sheltering roof you lie.' (ll.19-20) This image of recollection argues that the deceased, however "tyrannical", can never die as they live in the traumas of soldiers. The narrator of 'Song' comes to the conclusion that this uprising was not a result of "justice" but a consequence of the human condition of greed, drawing the reader's attention to the gluttony of the feast and the location of the conquered castle to highlight the

rapaciousness of the soldiers. The only way to escape this human sin, the speaker believes, is to retreat into the glory of God's creation and ask for forgiveness: 'I'd rather listen to the skylarks' songs, | And think on Gondal's, and my Father's wrongs.' (ll.17-18) Hence he decides to retreat to the 'mountains wild' (l.25) and live with 'limbs unfettered, conscience undefiled' (l.27). The fact he summons the image of being 'fettered' reiterates Anne's argument that revolution does not equate to freedom, as one remains at the mercy of one's conscience. It was a moral and cultural impact that Patrick witnessed during the Irish Rebellion, one which led him to impress upon his children the value of human life. Through stories of a country they would never visit, the Brontë children collaborated with Patrick's philosophies, as well as their own ethics, to create fully-fleshed depictions of the casualties of conflict.

Cultural loyalty for an unseen country was a sensation – and often a pressure – the Rossetti children keenly felt. Gabriele's exalted reputation in Italy remained firmly in the background of his children's own careers. For instance, Dante Gabriel writes during a journey to Italy in 1854 – in search of inspiration for his own work – that he made the acquaintance of a Signor Ventura 'who came to me as the only Rossetti he could find in the Directory'[120], clearly hoping to find Gabriele instead. Many of his family letters expose feelings of inadequacy in the shadow of his father's creative reputation, especially with another Italian local and critic Mr. Maenza who had 'been reading Papa's *Beatrice*, which he admires very much. My *Ballad* has also been read, and received the necessary amount of compliments.'[121] The dismissive language here suggests that this respected critic and acquaintance of the family was not as enthusiastic in reading Dante Gabriel's work as he was his father's, or so Dante Gabriel clearly interpreted. Gabriele set a high standard in both England and Italy, which his children

[120] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Gabriele Rossetti, dated 12th January 1854, in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2. (122-124), p.123.
[121] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Gaetano Polidori, dated 26th October 1843, in *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2. (20-21), p.21.

felt they had to aspire to, but none felt the pressure like Dante Gabriel. As the eldest son, Dante Gabriel was being moulded to continue his father's work and share his favoured motifs. Gabriele's autobiography addresses Dante Gabriel directly, stressing this sentiment:

> As able poet I hear you already hailed,
>
> Already as able painted see you admired.
>
> Now onward, and the double-race course I win!
>
> You will be doing what I could not do.[122]

This final line emphasises the burden which Gabriele bestowed on his eldest son, Dante Gabriel was not only compelled to seek his own fame, but to continue his father's.[123] The dynamic between father and eldest son embodies the Rossetti family motto: *Fractas non flectas,* or 'break not bend'.[124] While Dante Gabriel struggled to continue using Gabriele's favoured motifs, a form of sibling rivalry occurred as the other Rossetti siblings sought their father's approval by also echoing his political sentiments in their work. However, the greatest competition which arose in the Rossettis' early childhood was between Dante Gabriel and Maria over who could be the greatest second-generation Italian writer.

The strongest connection to Gabriele's beloved Italy amongst the siblings was also Dante Gabriel's greatest pressure, his name. Born Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti, he was named after three talented men: his father, Charles Lyell, his English godfather and Dante enthusiast, and, Gabriele's literary and philosophical hero, Dante Alighieri. Although two of Dante Gabriel's three Christian names were Anglicized, Roe argues that Gabriele clearly preferred the Italian echoes within his son's name 'revealed in the nickname he gave his son: "Dantuccio" rather than "Charley".'[125] Although Dante Gabriel would later use the exotic Italian connection to his advantage as an artist, rearranging his names to place 'Dante'

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[122] Gabriele Rossetti, *Versified Autobiography,* MS, p.82.
[123] The expectation of Dante Gabriel to be the most successful Rossetti will be explored further in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[124] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.14.
[125] Ibid., p.43.

first[126], he must have felt the pressure in his childhood to aspire to this writer whom his father hero-worshipped. 'No doubt,' William Michael contemplates, 'our father's Dantesque [sic.] studies saturated the household air with wafts and rumours of the mighty Alighieri.'[127] Gabriele was enraptured by the author of *The Divine Comedy,* considering him the very spirit of Italy. As Milbank argues, it is not surprising that the Rossetti siblings 'should have found themselves so concerned not just with Dante, their national poet, but with question of allegorical exegesis, because their father had so entwined his own career and exile with that of Dante'.[128] To unite his career with Dante, Gabriele believed, was to forge a connection with his homeland. Consequently, Gabriele often described his banishment in echoes of Dante. For instance his autobiography describes his '[h]aving in England stayed my roaming course' as being like Dante's as '"*Vita Nuova*!"[I] was my word', a reference to Dante's text *La Vita Nuova*: The New Life.[129] A significant aspect of Gabriele's reinvention upon arriving in England was his new role as an esoteric interpreter of Dante. As Suzanne Waldman observes Gabriele 'made himself notorious through his stringently political interpretation of Dante's books.'[130] The first work he completed upon arrival in England was his two-volume commentary on Dante's *La Divina Commedia* (1825-26), and his Masonic and mystic readings became an art-form bordering on obsession. As Thomas explains, something 'not altogether sane' appeared to seize Gabriele when it came to Dante as '[i]n spite of family poverty, and the expense of publishing books of which large quantities remained unsold, he could not stop.'[131] William Michael depicts growing up with a Dante scholar as overwhelming:

> surrounded by ponderous folios in italic type […] filling page after page of prose, in impeccable handwriting, full of underscorings, interlineations and cancellings. We

[126] Please refer to Chapter Three for further details.
[127] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.63.
[128] Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians,* p.118.
[129] Gabriele Rossetti, *Versified Autobiography,* MS. p.78.
[130] Suzanne Waldman, *The Demon & The Damozel: Dynamics of Desire in the Works of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), p.69.
[131] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Biography,* p.29.

> contemplated his labours with a certain hushed feeling […] but were assuredly not much tempted to take up one of his books.[132]

Dante was the ghost that haunted their house in Charlotte Street, but especially his spiritual godson Dante Gabriel whose 1861 poem 'Dantis Tenebrae' addresses his then-deceased father, impelling him to comprehend how the Dante spectre affected him: 'And did'st thou know indeed, when at the font| Together with thy name thou gav'st me his'.[133] As a result, the childhood overexposure to Dante caused a young Dante Gabriel to withdraw from studying Alighieri's work. By the time Dante Gabriel became a Pre-Raphaelite, his role as a Dante doppelganger was indisputable in the public mind, due to the high volume of paintings he completed depicting Dante's works, such as 'Beata Beatrix' (c.1864-1870) and 'Dante's Dream' (c.1871). Consequently, William Michael acknowledges: '[i]t has often been said […] that Dante Rossetti was, from childhood or early boyhood, a devoted admirer of the stupendous poet after whom he was christened.'[134] To remove this connection was to alter the artist. Nevertheless, William Michael categorically states: 'This is a mistake.'[135]

Although Dante Gabriel clearly embraced the Dante-esque aspects once he understood the benefits it granted his career, in childhood he and his siblings felt 'rather alienated' from the poetic giant, as William Michael argues: '[t]he *Convito* was always a name of dread to us, as being the very essence of arid unreadableness. Dante Alighieri was a sort of banshee in the Charlotte Street houses; his shriek audible even to familiarity'.[136] The banshee tormented Dante Gabriel the most, William Michael comments, as, although Gabriele's teachings meant 'the child breathed Dante […] he did not think Dante, nor lay him to heart […] [I] question whether my brother had ever read twenty consecutive lines of Dante until he was some

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[132] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.63.
[133] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Dantis Tenebrae (In Memory of my Father) *Poems* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1912) (145-46), ll.1-2.
[134] William Michael, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.63.
[135] Ibid.
[136] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., pp.63-64.

fifteen or sixteen years of age'.[137] In a subtle child-rebellion, the children were intimidated by the idea of having to appreciate both Alighieri and their father, as well as understand Gabriele's often inflated and flawed interpretations. Too young to be confident in their own opinions, the Rossetti children simply avoided Dante Alighieri. If Gabriele wished for a child who would immerse themselves entirely in their Italian heritage, he need only turn to Maria.

In the midst of Italian exiles it was 'Maria more especially' who was enraptured by their stories.[138] When William Michael recollects the fascination with which Maria used to regard their father's companions, he pictures her gazing at them 'with her dark Italian countenance and rapt eyes—drinking it all in'.[139] Although Maria would grow to emulate her mother's devotion to religion[140], the affinity she felt with her father arose from an extremely young age with their shared sense of "otherness". Gabriele was empowered in England by his distinctly 'foreign' identity as it allowed him to be unconventional - a method Maria subsequently used to distinguished herself from her siblings. A rare anecdote of Maria in childhood appears to prefigure her later status as the 'outsider' Rossetti; when visiting a café with Gabriele they met with one of his many Italian friends who admired Maria's Italian appearance. Thomas describes how 'Maria listened gravely, but later said "Papa, I don't believe what that gentleman said. Christina is much prettier than I, everyone says so."'[141] Maria's complexion was 'more than commonly dark, hair thickly curling and black, eye large,' William Michael attests, '[h]er features were not more than moderately good, nor was her figure advantageous.'[142] The comparison of the sisters sparked 'a strong spice of jealousy'

[137] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.64.
[138] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters, with a Memoir*, Vol.1., p.54.
[139] Ibid.
[140] As will be explored in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[141] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.21.
Although Maria does not explicitly state this in any surviving documents, William Michael implies her resentment was not limited to Christina, as Dante Gabriel was also 'much handsomer than Maria – with a vivid, animated, and resolute look, which presaged to the discerning that he might prove something remarkable' (William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp.18-19.)
[142] William Michael Rossetti, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their World*, p.6.

William Michael confessed his sister possessed.[143] Nevertheless, through her father's example Maria learned to value her 'strictly Italian' appearance[144] and committed herself entirely to furthering her Italian connection. Maria ensured she read both English and Italian by the time she was five-years-old,[145] and was the sole Rossetti to master Italian grammar[146] - her bilingual skills served her well as she became an Italian tutor later in life. Her ability to appeal to her father's culture, as well as Maria's natural studiousness, seems to have resulted in some sibling contention and Dante Gabriel and Maria raced to be the first sibling to be printed on Gaetano's printing press. Their grandfather had offered to "publish" yet another chivalric poem by Dante Gabriel titled 'Hugh the Heron (1843)', as soon as he could find the incentive to finish it. However, he was overtaken by thirteen-year-old Maria, who was working on a distinctly Italian narrative, a blank verse translation of a poem by Giampietro Campana which she titled 'On the Death of Lady Gwendoline Talbot (1843)'.[147] This historical figure was an English noblewoman who married Prince Marcantonia Borghese, the eighth Prince of Sulmona. She was beloved in Rome for her altruistic work with the poor and sick, unfortunately she passed away aged twenty-two in 1840. 'The Princess's burial', Roe explains, 'was attended by thousands, and there was talk of beatification.'[148] Maria's translation was fascinated with her martyrdom and Christianity, focusing on 'heroism of a quieter, specifically feminine kind, which derives its strength from qualities of endurance, faith, community and service.'[149] Her work entirely juxtaposed the stereotypical romances of her brother, and the fact she not only appealed to her father's Italian roots but beat her brother to the printing-press must have emphasised to both her father and her siblings that

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[143] William Michael Rossetti, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their World:* A Personal View from *Some Reminiscences and other writings of William Michael Rossetti,* ed. Angela Thirlwell (London: The Folio Society, 1995), p.6.
William Michael does continue to explain this "sole" flaw of Maria's 'was early conquered as a matter of principle'.
[144] Ibid.
[145] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, with a Memoir*, Vol.1., p.27.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Unfortunately any surviving copies of this story are not available to the public.
[148] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.55.
[149] Ibid, pp.55-56.

she was not to be superseded. Even in later life, as her vocation shifted from the literary to the pious, she remained true to the Italian apprenticeship of her father – and completed a widely celebrated study of his hero, Dante Alighieri.

Figure 8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Frontpiece to *A Shadow of Dante*' in Maria Rossetti, *A Shadow of Dante* (1871)' (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894).

Although the most scholarly of the Rossettis in youth; Maria would become the most neglected Rossetti in criticism. Henrietta Garnett, for instance, summarises her life as the 'sister who became an Anglican nun'.[150] The rarity of her surviving juvenilia, such as the unavailable 'On the Death of Lady Gwendoline Talbot (1843)', is a result of the expunging of personal materials she was required to complete when entering the Sisterhood.[151] However, she did complete one work prior to her initiation that has stood the test of time: *A Shadow of Dante*.[152] This exegesis-style examines Dante's *Divine Comedy* from a Christian perspective. Her approach is extremely pragmatic, exploring the topography of purgatory and hell in exceptional detail, and grounding the characters Dante meets along his eschatological journey in their historical roots. John Ruskin would dismiss her work as 'Evangelical

[150] Henrietta Garnett, *Wives and Stunners* (London: Macmillan, 2012), p.6.
[151] As will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[152] Maria Rossetti, *A Shadow of Dante* (1871) (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

nonsense'.[153] He disparagingly declares how '[t]he poor girl knows (as she ought) nothing about much that Dante means […] she is very conceited to think a girl can interpret Dante in such respects.'[154] Nevertheless, Stanley Weintraub explains how '*A Shadow of Dante* was favourably reviewed in the *Athenaeum* and *Saturday Review,* the first of a number of good notices which propelled the book in sales beyond its publisher's expectations.'[155] What Ruskin did not seem to recognise was that Maria was hoping to prove that a "girl" can give insight into masterpieces such as *The Divine Comedy.*

While Maria does celebrate the poetic skill of Dante in a manner which is befitting of Gabriele Rossetti's daughter, describing him a 'unlimited in place and period' (2), one aspect which distinguishes *A Shadow of Dante* from the work of other nineteenth-century Dante scholars is how Maria emphasises the role of Dante's Beloved Beatrice. 'The Beatrice of Dante', Maria observes, 'remains to this day the perplexity of scholars and of commentators, some regarding her as a personage from first to last purely allegorical.' (18) It is telling which of these 'commentators' Maria is in fact referring to, describing Dante's heroine as '[t]he Beatrice of Dante' because this is the title bestowed to her in Gabriele's 1842 study *La Beatrice di Dante.* Written in Italian, this work argues that 'by applying to Beatrice what the poet says of Love, we should conclude that she is not for herself as substance'.[156] Gabriele believed that the Beatrice described in the *Divine Comedy* had surpassed any woman who supposedly existed in Dante's lifetime – and appears to doubt the existence of Beatrice altogether. He argues that the *Divine Comedy* transforms her into a metaphor of two parts

[153] John Ruskin letter to Contance Hilliard, dated 31st October 1877, John Rylands MS.1254 in John Rylands University Library, Manchester.
[154] Ibid.
Alison Milbank argues that '[t]his antagonistic response may owe something to the family tradition amongst the Rossettis that Maria had mistaken Ruskin's attentions, and had fallen in love with him.' Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians,* p.132.
[155] Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography* (London: W H Allen, 1978), p.181.
[156] Gabriele Rossetti, *La Beatrice di Dante* (London: P. Rolandi, 1842), p.39.

'first alive and then dead' – she is a symbol of 'the most gutted love' in life and the 'weeping' of romantic separation in 'her in death'.[157]

Maria, however, seems almost insulted by this interpretation: '[h]ow is so astounding a discrepancy to be accounted for? How could such a propensity as this be the adversary of Reason?' (23) As Julia Straub observes, Maria avoids her father's key concept of allegory, she 'acknowledges that Dante's style is "elliptical" and "recondite" and warns the reader that this text is double-layered', however, 'she eschews any more direct reference to what in her father's interpretations was a *gergo,* a consistently elaborated superficial "veil"'.[158] To conceal Beatrice in veils and allegories, for the proto-feminist Maria, was to reduce an actual woman to a man's whims. Maria "rescues" Beatrice from her father's reading and cements her in reality – detailing how she lived, married and died. She makes it clear that her readings are derived from historical evidence, for instance, Maria states '[t]here is no reason to believe that Dante ever sought Beatrice in marriage, nor any distinct indication that she so much as knew of the pure, lofty, ideal love she had inspired.' (20) Maria separates Beatrice from Dante's perception of her into a tangible woman. It is significant to note, however, that Maria was not disputing her father's interpretation in an act of disrespect – she even dedicated the work 'to the beloved memory of my father' (iii). In fact, Weintraub observes how the publication of *A Shadow of Dante* was 'almost a family affair. William and [Dante] Gabriel had helped with is design [Fig.8.] […] the family link was emphasised by her use of quotations from William's flat translation of the *Inferno*'.[159] While Christina did not directly collaborate with the work, she did describe it as 'a work written from a fund of knowledge far wider and deeper than could be compressed into its pages, eloquent and elegant, the fruit of a fine

[157] Gabriele Rossetti, *La Beatrice di Dante* (London: P. Rolandi, 1842), p.19.
[158] Julia Straub, *A Victorian Muse: The Afterlife of Dante's Beatrice in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Continuum, 2009), p.45.
[159] Weintraub, *Four Rossettis,* p.181.

mind and a noble soul.'[160] The unwavering support the siblings offered Maria demonstrates what *A Shadow of Dante* argues – that Dante 'rises before us and above us like the pyramids – awful, massive, solitary' (2). Alison Milbank interprets the 'sublimity of this image' as putting 'Dante quite beyond rivalry or imitation, to remove him from family competitiveness.'[161] After Gabriele's death it seems, the Rossetti siblings no longer used their Italian heritage to rival each other's juvenilia, but to collaborate in memory of their father. Maria's title is even a tribute to Gabriele as 'the Shadow of Dante' or 'L'ombra di Dante' is taken from the name of a chapter in Gabriele's 1846 work, *Il Veggente in Solitudine*.[162] The evolution of sibling rivalry into a support network when it came to Dante not only demonstrates how the Rossettis matured over the years, but also how the siblings would use collaboration to reimagine and process their father's philosophies.[163]

The Shadows of Heroes: Echoing the Fathers' Written Works

While the Brontë and Rossetti children seemed determined to learn from their fathers' experiences of war and politics to expand their adventure narratives, both Patrick and Gabriele impressed upon their children the trauma such tumultuous eras can trigger. Consequently, as the Brontë and Rossetti children grew older and increasingly aware of the political and cultural events of their own era, they continued to creatively process the occurrences. The fusion of fiction and social commentary parallels the collaboration between their fathers' experiences and the siblings' own observations. The Brontës and Rossettis collaborated with their fathers as well as each other in order to create complex

[160] Christina Rossetti letter to Olivia Madox Rossetti, dated in 14th February 1889, in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti With Some Supplementary Letters and Appendices*, Ed. William Michael Rossetti (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p.124.
[161] Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998), p.132.
[162] Gabriele Rossetti, *Il Veggente in Solitudine* (Naples: Parigi, 1846), pp.261-278.
[163] The poignant echoes of Gabriele in *A Shadow of Dante* demonstrate how a literary family clings to collaboration when a family member's voice is lost. As will be discussed in Chapters Three and Five of this thesis.

depictions of conflict throughout their careers, voice their own current anxieties, and pay homage to their fathers' teachings.

For the Brontës, Patrick's philosophies were a source of inspiration within Haworth church, as well at the Parsonage. A clergyman's homilies may not appear as exciting to a child as Patrick's experiences of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 or his time as a volunteer militia recruit, nevertheless his Evangelical beliefs only heightened the stakes of the conflicts the family observed abroad. As Barker explains, Patrick's religious beliefs meant that he was 'certain that the world would one day end in the apocalyptic style of the Revelation of St. John. There was a general belief at the time, particularly in Evangelical circles, that the end of the world was imminent'.[164] Victorian writers and artists compared the savagery of St. John's prophesies of Armageddon to the turmoil of the era; as Simon Marsden explains, '[t]he visions and symbols of biblical apocalyptic claimed to open glimpses of a transcendent perspective upon the apparent disorder and reversals of present experience'.[165] The prophecy of Armageddon not only explained the interminable violence that was spreading throughout the globe but offered an opportunity for recreation. Although the turbulence of the Apocalypse narrative reads as if God had abandoned the human race, Revelations in fact reassures us that our temporary struggles are part of a larger plan - promising that our suffering on earth is rewarded with a reunification with God. With the threat of Judgement Day also came the promise of heaven, as Patrick's poem 'The Phenomenon (1824)' envisages the 'heavenly joy' of the moment: 'When the great Judge will loud approving say – | "Come with me, to the heaven of heavens, away!"[166] Apocalypticism contemplates reinvention of

[164] Barker, *The Brontës,* pp.151-152.
The Book of Revelation is at the core of Christian eschatology, believed to have been written by St. John the Evangelist of Patmos when he experienced a beatific vision of the end of days. This Biblical narrative prophesises a hellish series of beasts; plagues and violence as well as the numerous blessings of angels and an ultimate reunion with the divine.
[165] Simon Marsden, *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.115.
[166] Patrick Brontë, 'The Phenomenon or, An Account in Verse of the Extraordinary Disruption of a Bog' in *Brontëana: The Rev. Patrick Brontë, A.B., His Collected Works and Life,* Ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Bingley: T. Harrison & Sons, 1898) (201-208), ll.177-80.

oneself to become worthy of unifying with the divine. Additionally, as the believer enters heaven the world itself is remade, the chaos of St. John's forewarnings require the earth itself to be deconstructed in order to be restored in God's eyes and relieved of human folly. As Kevin Mills maintains: '[t]he emergence of the human world out of chaos forms a significant thematic strand to the book of Revelation; there are repeated hints that its visions are as much to do with creation as with destruction.'[167] The Revelations chronicle is imposed upon nineteenth-century political and cultural experiences in order to *reveal* what needs to be changed, thus 'the world is born as a result of the defeat of primordial chaos.'[168] While the belief in a literal end of the world was in decline towards the end of the nineteenth-century, this concept of renewal integrated itself within the culture, as Mill explains: '[i]f the Apocalypse was the be of any use at all, it had to be as an index of the times […] offering prophetic insight into the spiritual significance of world events'.[169]

Consequently, significant clashes such as the American Civil War and the French Revolution seemed precursors to the final collision of heaven and earth. The former, Anne C. Rose explains, was an event 'of such monumental proportions that it revived apocalyptic hopes and, as the killing continued, sober theories of God's retributive justice.'[170] Equally, the French Revolution was described by Evangelical preacher George Coly as 'the sixth trumpet'[171], echoing the seven trumpets sounded by seven angels in Revelations 8-11, which are prophesised to announce the last judgement.[172] Incidentally, this metaphor was utilised by Charlotte in 'The Twelve Adventurers' to emphasise the devastation of war: 'we were all

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[167] Kevin Mills, *Approaching Apocalypse: Unveiling Revelation in Victorian Writing* (Lewisburg: Buckell University Pres, 2007), p.17.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid., p.25.
[170] Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.19.
[171] George Croly, *The Apocalypse of St. John: Or Prophecy of the Rise, Progress, and Fall of the Church of Rome; the Inquisition; the Revolution of France; the Universal War; and the Final Triumph of Christianity. Being a New Interpretation.* (New York: E. Littell, 1827), p.282.
[172] 'Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded.' Revelations 8:13.

on our legs and filled with terror, which was changed to desperation by another blast of the terrible trumpet.'[173] Interpretations of the Book of Revelations pervaded culture and art, as well as Patrick Brontë's sermons, and subsequently permeate the Brontë juvenilia. To study politics and warfare under Patrick's influence was to subsequently analyse the Evangelical predictions of the end of time, hence many of the Brontë siblings' depictions of discord bear an ecclesiastical tone as they interact with Patrick's sermons. Apocalyptic images filled libraries and art galleries, most famously in the works of John Martin, as David Bindman observes: the passion of Martin's images 'lie in their marriage of an apocalyptic vision of destruction, prophesised in both the Book of Daniel and Revelation, with an image of the modern city'[174], such as his 'Fall of Babylon' (1831) and 'The Great Day of His Wrath' (c.1851-3). The amalgamation of the scriptural and the contemporary landscape appealed to the Evangelical belief of imminent end. As an aspiring artist and the son of an Evangelical minister, Branwell Brontë was drawn to the complex scenes painted vividly by Martin as three large mezzotints by Martin hung on the walls of the parsonage and he and Patrick possessed multiple framed engravings of his work. Many of Branwell's early artistic works demonstrate an early absorption in the aesthetic of the apocalypse, as Alexander and Sellars maintain: '[w]e know from 'Queen Esther' [Fig.9.] and from Branwell's painting of 'Jacob's dream' that he was interested in copying Biblical scenes.'[175] The passion of the image twinned ideally with the violent battles he described in his juvenilia, including his 'Misery' sequence (1835-36).[176] As explored in Chapter One, this two-part poem depicts 'the trials of Lord Albert, the only survivor of a bloody battle. He is riding back to his castle, where his

[173] Charlotte Brontë, 'The Twelve Adventurers' (1829) in *Tales of Glasstown,* (5-15), p.8.
[174] David Bindman, 'The English Apocalypse' in *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come,* Ed. Frances Carey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) (208-270), p.265.
[175] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, Eds. *The Art of the Brontës,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.21.
[176] Branwell Brontë, 'Misery I & II' in *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë, Eds.* Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), pp.12-33. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

beloved waits.'[177] While the predominant aspect of the narrative is his mourning for his paramour Maria, he is nevertheless still required to prove his worth on the battlefield: 'Soldiers! Attend! It calls you back | From the pursuers' bloody track' (II, ll.38-39). With a new perspective on the finality of death, Lord Albert emulates the images of Revelations in search of a heavenly explanation for earthly sufferings. Misery Parts I & II also bear strong echoes of his father's Apocalyptic predictions in his sermon 'Preached in the Church of Haworth in reference to an Earthquake (1824)'.

Figure 9. Branwell Brontë, 'Queen Esther' [Copy of Martin's 'Belshazzar's Feast', 1820] (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830)

In his fragile emotional and mental state the savagery of war has intensified for Lord Albert, who looks across the battlefield to see 'the wreck of conflict' (II, l.45), describing the bodies of the wounded and dead in graphic detail: 'There! – a shattered carcase [sic.] lies | Without the power to look or rise.' (II, ll.77-78) The most brutal image however is Lord Albert loitering over the body of a conquered Chieftain who is 'sightless now - | The shot has torn his face away.' (II, ll.81-82) While Branwell describes the fallen chief as 'sightless' there is

[177] Carolyne Van Der Meer, 'Branwell Brontë's Role in the Creation of Heathcliff' *Brontë Studies,* 42:3 (2017), (211-219), p.215.

something he sees that Lord Albert cannot, the deceased souls now know what lies beyond death. Throughout 'Misery', driven by the loss of Maria, Lord Albert yearns for a sense of eschatological verification. He envies those soldiers on their deathbeds because they know if angels shall fill 'the unknown void round which he lingers' (II, ll.160-61), or whether there is no hope. 'I see no ray', Lord Albert laments, 'To light me on my heavenly way' (II, ll.185-186), only the dying can know the afterlife. Consequently, he watches the dying almost obsessively, yearning to be told 'the secret dying' (II, l.158) and for answers to the 'awful mystery undefined' (II, l.148). He seemingly finds hope in one man who appears to welcome the final sleep: 'See! how resignedly he dies. |Aye! What a look of peace and love' (II, ll.149-150), yet he still 'scarce had the power to see' (I, l.233) the reassurance of peace when surrounded by such misery. His need to know what lies beyond is an echo of how the apocalypse was almost welcomed in religious art and writing of the time. Although it may seem God had abandoned the human race, the apocalypse narrative in fact reassures us that our temporary struggles are part of a larger plan.

Branwell's Lord Albert, however, desires the existence of the apocalypse because it promises a reunion with both God and Maria, but also because the Last Judgement offers a chance of redemption for a soldier who has slain many men. He imagines an almighty cataclysm, in the form of a flood, washing 'off his bursting blood' (II, l.84) and washing his sins clean. Had the character heard Patrick Brontë's 'Sermon Preached in the Church of Haworth in reference to an Earthquake', however, he would know that one should not wait for death or the final days to seek forgiveness. Patrick argued that mankind should view the tragedies of the era as prophesising the apparently imminent apocalypse and subsequently change one's ways. For Patrick, it was not simply the large-scale injustices in the world that foretold Armageddon, he believed that God showed himself through his creation and thus proved his wrath through the demolition of his earth. In the autumn of 1824, he believed he was proved correct when a bog burst four miles behind the Parsonage on Crow Hill, although the tremors and flooding

were so substantial that Patrick believed it to be an earthquake at the time. The Brontë family would always recall this natural disaster with horror, especially Patrick who feared for his young children's lives – while he was safe at home the children were on the moors with servant Sarah Garrs. Fortunately, they were able to take cover from the sudden storm and apparent earthquake, and Patrick braved the elements to go 'in search of them and found them in a Porch […] terrified, and so was he till he found them.'[178] The fear Patrick felt was so great, Barker maintains, that his 'immediate response' was that the Apocalypse had probably 'happened at that moment.[179] The feeling of being in the midst of an earthquake was in accord with how Patrick believed the 'last and greatest day' would begin, described in 'The Phenomenon' as 'the universal frame of nature shall tremble, and break, and dissolve.'[180] True to his Evangelical values, Patrick believed the "quake" was heaven-sent – describing the bog in 'The Phenomenon' as opening '[w]ith mighty force by the four winds of heaven'[181] – and immediately took to write a sermon, pleading with his parishioners to address their consciences in preparation for the end of days. 'Sometimes earthquakes are produced', Patrick told his flock, 'as instruments of condign and final punishment; when men have obstinately persevered in rejecting the offered mercies of the Lord, and have proceeded to open rebellion against him.'[182] The apocalypse, according to Patrick, is not a tale of the divine destroying man, but men being the architects of their own ruin. Disasters are 'solemn forerunners' of the end and are thus intended, Patrick argues, to 'turn sinners from the error of their ways', but 'if sinners continue to despise his mercies, and disregard his judgements, they shall at last be placed for ever beyond the reach of redemption, in eternal torments.'[183] Patrick's teachings bestow an even darker element to Lord Albert's eschatological

[178] Sarah Garrs's relative Mrs H. Rhodes (c.1887) cited in Barker, *The Brontës,* p.151.
[179] Barker, *The Brontës,* pp.151-152.
[180] Patrick Brontë, 'A Sermon preached in the Church of Haworth on Sunday, 12th day of September 1824 in reference to an Earthquake, and extraordinary Eruption of Mud and Water, that had taken place ten days before' in *Brontëana: The Rev. Patrick Brontë, A.B., His Collected Works and Life* (209-219), p.215.
[181] Patrick Brontë, 'The Phenomenon', ll.87-90.
[182] Patrick Brontë, 'A Sermon preached […] in reference to an Earthquake', p.215.
[183] Patrick Brontë, 'A Sermon preached […] in reference to an Earthquake', p.218.

contemplations as he appears to consider that the battle he witnessed *is* the eschatological verification he seeks. As he overlooks '[t]he vilest mass of carnage' (II, l.264) he sees that 'my home were Hell – | No hope, no hope' (II, ll.336-337) – an echo of Dante Alighieri's description of the gates of Hell, above which reads: 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'.[184] Finally recognising the true horrors of war seen throughout his military career to be an apocalyptic precursor, Lord Albert welcomes divine comfort that the end will not be far behind: 'Oh, what's to come! | God, if there be a God, look down!' (II, ll.328-329)

This desire for reassurance when surrounded by vast apocalyptic visions was one Gabriele Rossetti greatly desired for his children. He explicitly told them to appreciate the security of their homeland, and to speak when they witnessed injustices at home and abroad:

> <I envy you, my children. Adverse doom
>
> Gave me a different lot – I'll not repine.>
>
> Free you were born, and I was born a serf[185]

While the tyranny of his country meant Gabriele was expelled for his political commentary, he knew such a fate would not occur from the security of Britain. Consequently, he instilled in his children an appreciation for their Anglo-Italian identity as well as a sense of duty to call attention to injustices occurring abroad. Hence, '[f]rom their youngest days,' Angela Thirwell observes, 'all the Rossetti children had been conscious of their double cultural loyalties speaking Italian with their father and English with their mother.'[186] Gabriele was eternally grateful to his new English home for the sanctuary it offered him, but longed for his homeland, as his autobiography recalls: '<Grief said to me, "Thy country thou hast lost": | Joy

[184] Dante Alighieri, 'Canto III' in *The Divine Comedy* (c.1308-20) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.210.
[185] Gabriele Rossetti, *A Versified Autobiography,* MS., p.82. Lines within parentheses <> throughout this chapter section are omitted from the published version of the autobiography.
[186] Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy, The Other Rossettis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.253.

answered, "Thou escapest from tyranny">'.[187] His torn loyalties were embodied in his literary double Professor Pesca of *The Woman in White* who, like Gabriele, is an exile whose 'ruling idea' of his existence is his vow 'to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum'.[188] He knew he could absorb himself in the circle of Italian rebels without repercussions, and his children could freely express their political views, even those believed to be at odds with the British government. His philosophy of intellectual and creative liberty was one his daughter Christina expressed in her earliest juvenilia.

In 1842, an eleven-year-old Christina Rossetti completed her first poetic compositions. The first was a birthday poem dedicated to her mother[189], whereas the second – titled 'The Chinaman'[190] - bears signs of her father's influence. This poem can be read from two perspectives, both of which were issues close to Gabriele's heart, the redefining of a country's physical boundaries and the boundaries of identity which are often equally re-evaluated as a result. Christina completed this poem towards the end of the First Opium War (1839-42), known at the time as the Anglo-Chinese War. This period of dissension between the imperialistic British and the Qing Dynasty was triggered, Julia Lovell argues, by 'a long-plotted land-and-resources-grab driven by industrial expansion and greed' on the British side, although the politicians claimed they were driven by 'the quest for military glory, for safe sea-routes, [and] for new investment opportunities.'[191] The imperialist ambition of the British was morally questioned by Christina who portrays her eponymous Chinaman's horror at the threat to his country and culture at the hands of '[t]he faithless English' (l.13). Conceivably, Christina was drawn to the diplomatic discussion of the war because she heard her father and

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[187] Gabriele Rossetti, *A Versified Autobiography*, MS. p.72.
This line is omitted from printed editions of this autobiography.
[188] Collins, *The Woman in White*, p.6.
[189] To analyse this poem, please refer to Chapter Two of this thesis.
[190] Christina Rossetti, 'The Chinaman' in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), pp.82-83. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[191] Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams, and the Making of Modern China* (London: Picador, 2011), p.61.

his companions debating the conflict, however, this verse is in fact an intellectual collaboration between Christina and William Michael. Her brother had returned home from school one day with an assignment: to complete an 'informal composition on the subject of China'[192] in response to what they had learned. Much like her interference within her brother's *bouts rimes* games[193], as Christina happened upon a struggling William Michael she decided to join him in his homework. William Michael, recalling their spontaneous teamwork, states: '[w]hat I wrote I have totally forgotten, Christina saw me at work, and chose to enter the poetic lists.'[194] With William Michael's knowledge and Christina's creativity combined 'The Chinaman' was envisioned.

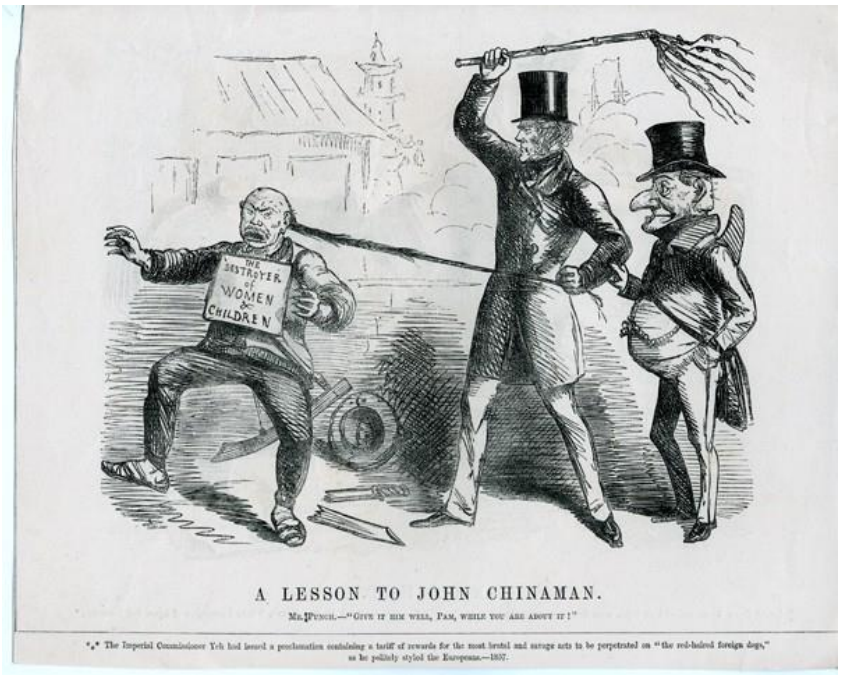

Figure 10. Unknown Artist, 'A Lesson to John Chinaman' (*Punch* Magazine, 1857)

[192] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p.464.
[193] As explored in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[194] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Poetical Works*, p.464.
Christina and William Michael would recall this collaboration well into adulthood. William Michael's diary entry on 9th October 1894, three months prior to Christina's death, describes how he '[s]aw Christina, who is surprisingly cheerful considering. She recited to me her old verses about a Chinaman's pigtail.
William Michael Rossetti, 'Diary Entry 9th October 1894' in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990). For further information on William Michael and Christina's collaboration in her final years, please refer to Chapter Five of this thesis.

The first words he speaks are of his pride for the homeland as he cries '[c]entre of the earth!' (l.1) while perusing a map. The Chinaman is declaring his motherland the epicentre of the world, simultaneously placing it at the core of his self. He claims his home to be the 'land of the brave, the beautiful, the wise.' (l.6) He surveys the cartographical depiction of his country 'portrayed in colours bright | China, all dazzling, burst upon the sight.' (ll.3-4) Admiring his country for its beauty as well as its expansive topography, he overlooks China's current geographical boundaries, believing them set in place. Unfortunately, as the poem continues a shift in tone implies this map may in fact be part of a war stratagem as the English invade the Chinaman's country to 'cut off my tail.' (l.13) The "tail" he refers to is the pigtail style of his hair, an aesthetic Christina would have perceived in Oriental art within the London museums close to her home, as well as the pejorative political cartoons of satirical magazines, such as *Punch* – whose caricatures of the Anglo-Chinese dynamic continued throughout the nineteenth-century. [Fig.10.] Initially the British disruption is depicted as little more than a nuisance, pulling at his pigtail like unseen poltergeists: 'He feels another tug – another, and another - | And quick exclaims, "Hallo! What's now the bother?"' (ll.9-10) Although this action can be read in a comedic tone due to the Chinaman's confusion, as well as the young age of the author, it is worth noting how distinctive this appearance is to his national identity. The popularity of wearing one's hair in a pigtail with a shaved forehead arose during this era of the Manchu (Qing) rulers, who Lee Khoon Choy explains had 'made pigtails customary for the male population' because the previous Ming dynasty made a custom of having long hair in a top-knot. 'The political purpose of this arbitrary imperial decree', Khoon Choy continues, 'was to exact a manifested, symbolic submission to the new dynasty rule from every male subject.'[195] Those who refused to wear their hair in a pigtail were publicly decapitated as a warning to other "untamed" Chinese. Thus, the pigtail is not only a signifier of the Chinaman's cultural kinship but a choice to survive. His hair allows Christina's protagonist to

[195] Lee Khoon Choy, *Golden Dragon and Purple Phoenix: The Chinese and their Multi-Ethnic Descendants in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2013), p.14.

prove he belongs in his beloved country.[196] Christina, by depicting the English belligerents persistently pulling on the Chinaman's pigtail is a metaphor for the British forces unravelling the Chinese ethos. By the poem's conclusion, the 'faithless English' have cut off his pigtail (l.13). The Chinaman's final lines echo a Samson-esque lamentation for his chopped hair, as he feels he no longer merges with the streets of China: 'Now in the streets I can no more appear, | For all the other men a pigtail wear!' (ll.15-16) By cutting his hair, the Chinaman loses a tie to his country, thus the action is symbolic of his being "cut-off" from his countrymen. Christina also appears to be predicting the Chinaman's fate should he be caught outside without a pigtail. As aforementioned, the pigtail was considered a symbol of submission to the ruling dynasty, hence to cut it was viewed as traitorous and resulted in beheading. According to Khoon Choy, there was an aphorism amongst Chinese men that warned them to 'keep your hair and lose your head, or keep your head and cut your hair.'[197] His fate sealed, sentenced to death by both country and invaders, the Chinaman casts the cut hair 'into the fire' (l.17), predicting the torment and eventual end he will suffer, 'those flames became its funeral pyre' (l.18). Christina and William Michael knew the tragedy of being divided from one's country, and therefore a part of one's self, through Gabriele and hence could sympathise with the Chinese. The pathos the Rossetti siblings displayed at a young age is a testament to their politically aware upbringing. Their empathy would only continue as they grew older and their work equally matured and, for Christina and William Michael especially, as they collaborated directly with their father.

[196] The pigtail was also a symbol of the economic success of Chinese opium exports, thus reiterating the poem's role as an alternative perspective of the First Opium War. In Siam, now Thailand, a large diaspora of Chinese opium-distributors flocked to Bangkok. Opium was not legal in the kingdom until the reign of King Rama IV ("Mangkok", 1851-68), nonetheless dens and opium sellers sprang up throughout the country and the pigtail of the Chinese became a symbol of the growing industry, in spite of legislation. Eventually, the Siam government insisted 'that the Thais and non-Chinese who smoked opium keep a pigtail' like their Chinese dealers'. (12)

[197] Khoon Choy, *Golden Dragon and Purple Phoenix*, p.12.

Christina Rossetti portrays the persistence of human suffering in order to provoke pathos, and therefore moral correction, in her readers. Patrick Brontë's writings apply a similar technique, except he argues that those who refuse to mend their ways will be the ones to suffer. His works entreat self-preservation as well as compassion, as it depicts God attempting to communicate with human kind by interacting with nature. The deific shows men the correct path through natural disasters, pathetic fallacy and visions that prove His omnipotence. For instance, Patrick's poem 'The Nightly Rebel'[198] – included in his 1815 novella *The Cottage in the Wood* –argues that God will always show benevolence before resorting to more dramatic displays of power. The poem, as summarised in *Cottage in the Wood,* tells the story of William Bower, a young man determined to rise so he can marry his love, the middle-class Mary. However, once she rejects him he indulges in 'ruinous excess' with 'two of his wicked companions. Drunkenly stumbling into a forest on their way home, the men are assailed by a furious tempest of wind, rain and thunder.'[199] The men have divulged in the 'fatal snare' of gambling (l.13) and alcohol as each man 'quaffs his glass, and thirsty calls for more, | Till maddening mirth, and song, and wild uproar.'[200] (ll.3-4) The apocalyptic forewarning of the 'hideous darkness, wind, and rain, and fire' which 'Heaven seems to vent on man its hottest ire!' (ll.45-46) is the divine's way of encouraging the men to change their sinful ways. Although this is not overtly a wartime narrative, we can observe that protagonist William Bower shares his Christian name with Patrick's aforementioned brother who engaged in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. By partaking in such a violent conflict, Patrick would have viewed William's actions as defiance against God's command. Correspondingly, his indulgent character William Bower is hurling 'defiance at the powers on

[198] Patrick Brontë, 'The Nightly Rebel; or the circumstances of William Bower's Conversion' (124-128) in *The Cottage in the Wood, or the Art of becoming Rich and Happy* (1815) in *Brontëana,* pp.102-130. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[199] Patrick Brontë, *The Cottage in the Wood, or the Art of becoming Rich and Happy* (1815) in *Brontëana,* pp.115-116.

[200] The gluttony and desire for escapism portrayed in these opening lines appear a precursor to the alcohol abuse of the distressed Angrian soldiers in Branwell and Charlotte's later juvenilia, as will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. The opening chapter of Charlotte's *Shirley,* depicting the alcohol-abuse of young curates, can also be read as an echo of Patrick's male characters, this chapter will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

high' (ll.94), whilst Patrick does not depict his protagonist engaged in open rebellion against his fellow man, he does proceed into 'open rebellion' against God by 'rejecting the offered mercies of the Lord'.[201] He and his companions are thus punished with visions of battlefields and assassinations, seeming to prefigure a violent death worthy of one of Angria's fallen heroes. Having been thrown off their spooked horses in the storm, all three men experience grim visions as '[e]ach vapour gliding through the valley dim | Seem'd pale assassins form'd in dread array' (ll.174-175). These 'sad images', Patrick explains are, heightened by their '[p]ale guilt' for acting against God's wishes. (ll.132-33) The true terror comes when William imagines the airy forms shooting a 'cold bullet rankle in their heart; | Or, panting writhe beneath the bloody knife' (ll.126-127), suddenly in the midst of wraithlike crossfire as 'two sudden shots burst through the air!' (l.164) These warlike hauntings disappear as quickly as they emerged with the storm, and William's companions continue to spurn God's benevolence, they '[l]augh at their idle fears, and mock their God, | E'en whilst revealing his avenging rod!' (ll.159-160) William, however, recognises God's mercy and '[r]esolv'd through grace divine, to mend his ways' (l.180).

William Bower recognises these heaven-sent hallucinations to be a gift, not a brief nightmare, and resolves to change. His own "revelation" comes from graphic visions, like the tale of St. John, and feels God's presence reign upon him from the 'remotest stars shed on the lovely night' (l.68). The almost parental presence of the stars watching over the men, as well as the motif of the moon who 'unfolds her silver beam, | And gaily shine' (ll.73-74), symbolise hope amongst destruction – as does the apocalypse prophesy. The companions, by ignoring these sole sources of light, are disregarding God's guidance. Stars are a recognised symbol of direction, often used for navigation by seafarers, and it is an image that Branwell utilises in 'Misery I & II'. Lord Albert, in mourning for his lover as well as his comrades, searches for the 'single silver beam' (I, l.97) of the moon, in the hopes that it will

[201] Patrick Brontë, 'A Sermon preached […] reference to an Earthquake', p.215.

illuminate the scene and 'wake[d] me from my dreary dream | And bade my own darkness fly' (I, ll.98-100). The reassurance of this celestial body is emphasised by the doubting Albert who fervently prays for a sign of God's presence. Although he questions the existence of the divine throughout the poems, he chooses to believe the 'glimpse of Moonlight' (I, l.31) is from 'the wild wrack of heaven sent down' (l, l.32). Lord Albert appears to be seeking deific permission to leave his battlefield post by allowance of 'my Guardian Star!' (I, l.108) to 'light me on and guide me through' (II, ll.223-24) and take him away from his suffering. For Branwell and Patrick, these celestial bodies light the path God intends for mankind, away from their own sin. Emily Brontë also uses the parental, guardian tone embodied in Patrick's 'Nightly Rebel' as well as the threat of religious retribution observed in his 'The Phenomenon' and its accompanying sermon to encourage her readers to take the non-violent path, emulated most successfully in her 1845 poem 'Stars'.[202]

In this verse, the eponymous celestial bodies counsel Emily's readers along the morally correct course. Her unnamed narrator processes the world around her as she stares up at the night sky: 'Thought followed thought—star followed star' (l.13). A star's role in navigation is emphasised in the rhythm of the poem as the lyrical repetition parallels that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798)[203]: 'Day after day, day after day, | We stuck, nor breath nor motion'.[204] Emily's echo of this renowned seafaring narrative emphasises the role of stars in lighting the way as a naval pastime. Much like a sailor in the midst of a vast ocean, Emily's narrator is seeking a Divine guide. Two years prior to the writing of 'Stars', political leader Daniel O'Connell declared 1843 to be the 'Year of Repeal', as he fought for repeal of the Act of Union (1800) between England and Ireland, thereby

[202] Emily Brontë, 'Stars (1845)' in *Emily Jane Brontë: The Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), pp.5-6. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[203] Intriguingly, the fact that *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was published the same year as the Irish Rebellion may have been a source of inspiration for Emily as she and her father mourned for the fate of Ireland once more.
[204] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857), p.16.

initiating Irish independence. Patrick feared yet another civil disruption would be sparked in his motherland as a result, writing to his brother Hugh Brontë: 'As I learn from the Newspapers, Ireland, is at present in a very precarious situations, and circumstances there, must, I should think – lead to civil War – which in its consequences, is the worst of all wars.'[205] The powerlessness Patrick displays here, only being able to know of his homeland through the papers, must have only increased two years later when Ireland's morale suffered as a result of 'The Great Famine' – known predominantly as 'The Irish Potato Famine' (1845). The economic deprivation of the country resulted in a transposal of the cultural landscape, with approximately one million deaths as result of starvation, and a further two million Irishmen partaking in the great diaspora to England.[206] [Fig.11.] This famine was considered yet another precursor to Armageddon, Terry Eagleton argues, with writers and journalists of the era arguing it to be a 'consequence of God's mercy rather than his wrath, undoing the results of human folly and converting Ireland into a pleasant and prosperous land.'[207] Subsequently, by mimicking the cyclic tone of Coleridge's 1798 poem, as well as her narrator's observation of 'star followed star' (l.13), Emily is creating a sense of history repeating itself.

[205] Patrick Brontë letter to Hugh Brontë, dated 20th November 1843, cited in Green, *Father of Genius,* p.25.

[206] The original manuscript of Emily Brontë's 'Stars' is dated 14th April 1845, five months later – as Winifred Gérin explains –Branwell Brontë himself witnessed the 'first shiploads' of Irish immigrants arrive in Liverpool in August 1845: 'landing at Liverpool and dying in the cellars of the warehouses on the quays. Their images, and especially those of the children, were unforgettably depicted in the *Illustrated London News* – starving scarecrows with a few rags on them.' (Winifred Gérin, *Emily Brontë: A Biography* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.225-226.)

[207] Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), p.15.

THE IRISH CINDERELLA AND HER HAUGHTY SISTERS, BRITANNIA AND CALEDONIA.

Figure 11. John Leech, 'The Irish Cinderella and her Haughty Sister, Britannia and Caledonia'
(*Punch* Magazine, 1845)

The narrator attempts to conceal herself from earthly realities by entreating the 'watch divine' (l.8) of heaven, imploring the deific to let her 'sleep through his blinding reign, | And only wake with you!' (ll.47-48) Sanctuary is found in the bed chamber where Emily's speaker is surrounded by tangible boundaries, as well as the unseen veil, which separates her territory from the outside world including doors; windows and curtains, as she attempts to sleep through reality. The speaker describes herself as lying behind a veil, '[m]y lids closed down, yet through their veil, | I saw him, blazing, still' (ll.25-26) – the "him" to which she refers being the 'hostile light' (l.43) of the sun which 'does not warm, but burn.' (l.44) The veil emphasises the narrator's attempt to shut out the hellish daytime time world she does not wish to see, and the vicissitudes of reality it embodies. Nevertheless, the vulnerable narrator's dwelling is infiltrated by the outside world as 'the curtains waved, the wakened flies' (l.37), these galvanised insects embodies flies gathering around a corpse, denoting impending tragedy. The protagonist's paradise is breached as 'fresh winds shook the door' (l.36) – the concept of 'shaking' surroundings parallels the supposed "earthquake" that first arose fears of the apocalypse in the Brontë siblings, as well as Revelations 3 in which Christ

returns to atone humankind for their sins: '"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock."'[208] No matter how desperately the narrator beckons the stars to be restored – 'Oh, stars, and dreams, and gentle night; | Oh, night and stars return!' (ll.41-42) – the outside world cannot be ignored. The implication of insomnia is also reminiscent of Revelations, as Mills maintains: 'the prophetic utterances of both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles employ sleep as a metaphor for spiritual and moral decline. Awake! Is an oft-repeated alarm call […] in Romans, Ephesians, and Revelation.'[209] These Biblical narratives argue that one cannot sleep through reality; instead we must face it, much as William Bower is forced to address his own morality in 'The Nightly Rebel'. Emily shared her father's passion for a 'wild and burning form of poetic and religious feeling excited by a personal and heightened interaction with God'[210], whilst also fearing for the fate of those who ignore Divine guidance. Thus, Emily's final poem 'Why ask to know the date – the clime? (1846)'[211], considers what Marsden summarises as 'the hardening of the human heart against the influence of the sacred' and how such deific denial 'reaches its nadir in a vision of the natural order devastated by human violence.'[212]

'Stars' is an example of how apocalyptic imagery can be utilised to narrate personal experience, as opposed to unambiguously religious debates. Mills explains that this was common practice in nineteenth-century literature in response to the cultural utilisation of Revelations to clarify the disorder of reality; Apocalypticism can be used as 'a medium in which the concerns and problems of the individual can be seen to participate in, reflect, and even embody a larger process.'[213] In 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?' the 'larger

[208] Revelation 3:20.
[209] Mills, *Approaching Apocalypse,* p.74.
[210] Emma Mason, '"Some God of Wild Enthusiast's Dreams": Emily Brontë's Religious Enthusiasm', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 31, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) (263-277), p.263.
[211] Emily Brontë, 'Why ask to know the date – the clime? (1846)' in *Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari, pp.183-190. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[212] Marsden, *Emily Brontë and the Religious Marsden,* p.97.
[213] Mills, *Approaching Apocalypse,* p.27.

process' which forms the basis of the narrative is Emily's soldier narrator who battles in Gondal's civil war. His allegiance is initially on the Republican side of conflict, contemplating how '[t]hat noble gore our hands should shed | Like common blood' (ll.89-90). The soldier recalls how he believed in the cause in his youth – referring to his younger self as the 'Enthusiast' (l.31) – but has now become disenchanted with the war. The Narrator reminiscences about his initiation into the war effort:

> At first it hurt my chivalry
>
> To join them in their cruelty;
>
> But I grew hard – I learnt to wear
>
> An iron front to terror's prayer (ll.37-40)

Aware of the human cost of rebellion and battle, much like the unnamed narrator of Anne Brontë's 'Song (1845)', Emily's speaker observes in embittered tones the truth of "glory". He notes the sacrilege of supposedly religious men who 'knelt to God' (l.3) and yet 'worshipped crime, | And crushed the helpless even as we –' (ll.3-4). He asks how men can claim to be religious when they descend into 'civil war and anarchy' (l.6). However, the narrator is not a hypocrite as he recognises his own crimes. Exposure to war meant he had 'learnt' to 'laugh at death and look on life | With somewhat lighter sympathy.' (ll.7-8) Emily describes the civil war as an education in inhumanity, as the speaker also 'learnt to turn my ears away | From torture's groans' (ll.41-42) The violence of the conflict is emphasised as Emily describes how 'hundreds daily filled the grave' (l.46) and witnesses during the course of the poem how four score 'veterans strong' are 'shot down' (l.80). The poem not only laments the loss of young soldiers, but the innocent bystanders who suffer as a result of war. Emily's soldier pities the 'labouring peasants' (l.10) who are drawn into the war, just as Patrick Brontë's 'The Tempest' wished that 'all oppress'd with equal fear' would 'find shelter near!', away from the violence of rebellion.[214] In fact, the soldier's realisation of his sins is reminiscent of William Bower's revelations in 'The Nightly Rebel'. As aforementioned, Patrick's story sees William realise the

[214] Patrick Brontë, 'The Tempest' in *The Maid of Killarney*, (153-54), ll.11-12.

errors of his ways as the moon 'unfolds her silver beam'[215], leading to a series of apocalyptic visions. Equally, in 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?', Emily's narrator is forced to face the consequences of his actions in the '[w]ood-shadowed dales' as a 'harvest moon | Unclouded in its glorious noon' (ll.66-67) reveals the 'solemn landscape' (l.68) of the battlefield. Aware of his sins, the sword becomes 'alien' in the soldier's hand (l.32). The soldier identifies that his sins are not only that of bloodshed but '[o]f stifling mercy's voice within' (l.164), as Marsden summarises the soldier's sins are not only 'the external acts represented by the spilling of blood, but as the hardening of the heart, the silencing of mercy, of which his acts of violence are the expressions.'[216]

The soldier's imagery not only echoes the revelations of Patrick's poetry, but those of Revelations – specifically the harvest imagery embodied in St. John's narrative.[217] Revelations 14 depicts an angel of the Lord cutting down the harvest of the earth, a metaphor for the violence of Armageddon: 'The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and the blood flowed out of the press.'[218] The wine represents the blood of the human race which is spilled in the final days, which is paralleled in Emily's poem which describes how 'never hand a sickle held; | The crops were garnered in the field' (ll.13-14). The harvesting tool becomes a violent weapon which is used by man to cut-down their fellow humans, whilst echoing the divine retribution of Judgement Day. Although Emily does not utilise the image of the winepress, her speaker does describe how the crop is '[t]rod out', not by the feet of men or angel, but my 'horses' (l.15), emphasising the *en-masse* marching of soldiers into war. Inverting the apocalypse narrative once more, the harvest of 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?' does not produce the sacramental

[215] Patrick Brontë, 'The Nightly Rebel; or the circumstances of William Bower's Conversion', (124-128), ll.73-74.
[216] Marsden, *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination,* p.100.
[217] Ibid*.,* p.99.
[218] Revelation 14:19-20.

wine of human martyrdom, instead 'every ear was milky sweet' (l.16), the milk of the earth mingling with the 'mire of tears and human gore' (l.18). The concept of milk being extracted from the earth evokes the image of motherland, the milk of the country nourishing its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the soldier describes how war has 'weaned me from my country's breast | And brought me to that land of woe' (ll.29-30). Although as a Republican the soldier originally believed he was fighting on behalf of his home-country, he realises that the violence he enables only destroys his motherland. Emily's soldier not only echoes the imagery of Revelations, but awaits the fate her father preached lay at the end of Armageddon, the final Judgement. As Patrick's 'The Phenomenon' (1824) envisages how 'the great Judge will loud approving say – | "Come with me, to the heaven of heavens, away!"[219], Emily's soldier anticipates and accepts what 'Justice holds in store' for those '[r]eprisals for those days of gore' (ll.161-162). The repetition technique used in 'Stars' is utilised again in this poem to emphasise the soldier's belief that: "God will repay – God will repay!" […] The deeds that turn this earth to hell' (ll.171-173). The soldier and his comrades have destroyed their motherland and God's creation, and the apocalyptic imagery promises divine punishment for such crimes, just as Patrick's Evangelical narratives foreboded for his own protagonists. As a writer, a scholar and clergyman, Patrick Brontë fuelled his children's inspiration and the similarities between his writings from the 1810s throughout the siblings' careers until the final poem Emily completed, demonstrates the longevity of his influence, and how his philosophies grew increasingly applicable to the sufferings his children witnessed and experienced.[220]

Where Branwell and Emily concurred with their father's teachings, Christina Rossetti shared her father's political standpoint as a 'constitutional monarchist who believed in violence as a

[219] Patrick Brontë, 'The Phenomenon or, An Account in Verse of the Extraordinary Disruption of a Bog' in *Brontëana: The Rev. Patrick Brontë, A.B., His Collected Works and Life,* Ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Bingley: T. Harrison & Sons, 1898) (201-208), ll.179-80.

[220] The experiences of suffering in the final years of Branwell, Emily and Anne will be explored in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis.

last resort.'[221] Her desire to seek peace in the midst of war led her, as discussed in Chapter One, to apply for Florence Nightingale's community of nurses of the Crimean War with her Aunt Eliza. She was prevented only by her youth, just as her ill health would later preclude her from contributing to the household as a governess like her mother and sister. The 1840s was a sullen time for both Christina and Gabriele. In 1843, Gabriele's final profession as Professor of Italian at King's College came to a halt, as Thomas explains, when 'after a summer increasingly troubled by various aches and pains and a terrible cough, Gabriele had woken up one day to find his sight suddenly almost gone.'[222] After excursions to the English seaside as well as Paris in hopes of restoring his health – which led to Frances having to absent herself from the collaborative *Hodge-Podge* efforts – the family were forced to accept that Gabriele was no longer a viable breadwinner. As a result, by 1844 Christina's siblings and mother had disbanded: '[h]er mother and brother were out every day earning their meagre pay, steading Maria was far away, and Gabriel was occupied with his studies'[223], thus Gabriele's illness brought an end to the sibling co-operation more than once. The melancholic Christina was only permitted to remain at home after being diagnosed with anaemia in 1845 and later neuralgia. As the least dependent of the pair, Christina became Gabriele's caretaker and witnessed that the 'confident, energetic father of her childhood,' Jan Marsh maintains, 'had changed into a depressed and ailing invalid.[224]' Even Gabriele was struggling to recall his former self. His spirits worsened along with his health and thus decided to relive his glory-days by beginning his *Versified Autobiography* (c.1850)[225]:

<"How cruel a lot has been reserved for me!

I was a lynx, and have become a mole"

And oh how sore this contrast can afflict!

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[221] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.48.
[222] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.45.
[223] Ibid, pp.48-49.
[224] Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p.43.
[225] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti* [Italian Manuscript], circa.1850. MS. Ital. d.18 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford).

But no lamenting serves – my tale proceeds.>[226]

In his final years, Gabriele relived the Italian conflicts and his exile; hence his nursemaid Christina was immersed yet again in the divided Europe her father witnessed. Her father worked until his death in 1854 and Christina never forgot his political or moral philosophies. Christina's personal observations on the ceaseless nature of war came to a head in her poem 'Thy Brother's Blood Crieth'[227] which contemplates the greater costs of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). The first of a two-part poem series named 'The German-French Campaign 1870-1871'[228], Christina's prefacing caveat to the poem tells us, 'during the suspense of a great nation's agony' these pieces are aimed at 'expressing human sympathy, not political bias' (176).

Where Christina's 'Chinaman' implored readers to empathise with the occupied country, 'Thy Brother's Blood Crieth' unequivocally envisions the psychological trauma a crusade can have upon families. The very title accentuates the nature of warfare to divide countrymen and kin, the name being an echo of one of the original brother-against-brother narrative, the Biblical tale of Cain and Abel. Genesis 4:1-18 tells the story of Cain's fratricide and its repercussions: 'While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. The Lord said, "What have you done? Thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground."'[229] The betrayal was sparked when God preferred Abel's sacrifice to his brother's, thus Cain coveted both the Lord's favour and his brother's status as the favoured brother. As the sons of Adam and Eve, naturally these Biblical figures demonstrate susceptibility to temptation, and Cain's desire for his brother's blessings can be compared to the territorial clash of the French and Prussian forces. Envy, Christina argues, is a deadly sin. The Genesis excerpt from

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[226] Gabriele Rossetti, *Versified Autobiography,* MS. p.11. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[227] Christina Rossetti, *Poetical Works,* p.176. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[228] The other being 'To-Day for Me', see *Christina Rossetti: Poems and Prose,* Ed. Simon Humphries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.209-210.
[229] Genesis 4:8-10

which Christina derives her title also emphasises the violence of the campaign by drawing attention to the 'blood' it spills. The motif of spilled blood was one utilised by Christina throughout her poetry as a signifier, not of death, but of sacrifice. For instance, her 1862 poem 'The Convent Threshold' imagines the sacrifice of "traditional" womanhood, wifehood and motherhood that occurs when a woman chooses the life of a nun. Elizabeth Ludlow states that 'this dramatic monologue considers the pain of the spiritual journey' as the speaker addresses her lover in an attempt to 'persuade him to look beyond the transitory'.[230] Nevertheless, as she crosses the threshold of the convent her 'lily feet are soiled with mud, | With scarlet mud'[231] – 'scarlet mud' being a euphemism for blood. Equally, in her poem 'The Three Nuns', the final sister recalls how her 'feet bled as I stepped | The Cross was heavy and I wept.'[232] Both women are shedding blood for their sacrifice – an allusion to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, emphasised in the Eucharist through the wine representing the blood Christ spilt to redeem mankind[233] - however it is a distinctly feminine forfeit as they renounce the pleasures outside the convent. In 'Thy Brother's Blood Crieth', however, Christina explores distinctly masculine sacrifice. Just as the blood on the convent threshold 'tells a tale | Of hope that was, of guilt that was'[234], the blood in the poem dedicated to the German-French Campaign symbolises the 'hope that was' for a better world. The men fight for freedom and power, but Christina's poem, much like Gabriele's autobiography, aims to reveal the truth of war.

In *A Versified Autobiography,* Gabriele emphasises the horrors he witnessed during the Austrian invasion of Italy, when '<Hell seemed to hold its triumph over Heaven.>' (47)

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[230] Elizabeth Ludlow, *Christina Rossetti and the Bible: Waiting with the Saints* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p.86.
[231] Christina Rossetti, 'The Convent Threshold' in *Poetical Works,* (71-76), ll.7-8
[232] Christina Rossetti, 'The Three Nuns' (Third Poem) in *Maude: A Story for Girls* (265-298) in *Christina Rossetti: Poems and Prose,* Ed. Simon Humphries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) (288-293), ll.69-70.
[233] The theme of the Eucharist and female sacrifice in Christina Rossetti's works will be explored further in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[234] Christina Rossetti, 'The Convent Threshold', ll.8-9.

Throughout the infernal wars and revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gabriele did not ignore the sheer volume of fatalities, envisioning the '<shadows of those heroes reft of life | On fields of fight>' (12). While Gabriele is referring to battlefields, he also uses vinicultural images of fields and crops as a metaphor for the growth of a country and the 'reaping' a war initiates. While surveying the Italian condition, Gabriele states '<[f]ew flowers indeed I see, and many thorns, | I see the snares which envy schemes to lay>' (14). The "garden" of Italy is far from idyllic, but it had once been a vibrant, "fruitful" nation, as evidenced in its art history: 'The country's intellect displays its fruits: | <I saw appear, as firstling of the crop>' (41). Once the conflict destroys the fields of Italy, Gabriele is forced to seek a new intellectual Eden, and finds '<my Britannia, since in thee there beams | The Genius, fertile Genius, of Reform>' (75). Similarly to Gabriele's work, Christina depicts the fields of France and Germany in an Eden-like echo, describing how the 'corn-fields rippled in the sunshine | All her lovely vines, sweet-laden bowed' (ll.1-2). Paradise, however, is disrupted by human folly. In 'Thy Brother's Blood Crieth', the field setting prolongs the Cain and Abel parallel as Cain 'said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field," and when they were in the field Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him.'[235] Thus, the sons of the fallen Adam and Eve emphasise how ambition results in further expulsion from Eden. Destruction continues as 'the men tread the press, but not for sweetness, | And they reap a red crop from the field' (ll.9-10), the pressing denoting winemaking as vineyard owners once crushed grapes with their feet, however this wine creates a red crop. This image, much like Emily Brontë's 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?', emulates the bloodshed of Armageddon described in Revelations 14: 'The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and the blood flowed out of the press.'[236] The concept of wine transforming into blood is also reminiscent of the belief in Transubstantiation at the

[235] Genesis 4:8.
[236] Revelation 14:19-20.

Eucharist – which preaches that the bread and wine convert into the body and blood of Christ while maintaining the appearance of the food substances. Consequently, we are again reminded of the sacrificial aspect of war as Christina mimics the sacrament of Christ prior to his Crucifixion. The bloody imagery simultaneously echoes the martyrdom of Christ, the bloody winepress of Revelations, and the soaked feet of the sacrificing nuns of 'The Three Nuns' and 'The Convent Threshold'. The action of 'treading' can also be interpreted as representing the men marching to fight. The blood is then soaked into the field as a 'cry of blood goes up from reeking earth' (l.14), this image of devouring blood is reminiscent of Gabriele's autobiography which imagines Mother Italy denying 'rage' its appetite: 'Thou shalt not, cruel one, lap up my blood!" (72) There is also another Genesis 4 parallel in this metaphor as God chastises Cain for spilling Abel's blood: 'the soil that gaped with its mouth to take your brother's blood from your hand.'[237]

The fields Christina imagines no longer flourish as the men crush the crop and 'one man' – presumably a war general or king – spreads a cloud to block out the nurturing sun and the sky 'blackening, burst asunder | In rain and fire and thunder' (ll.5-6), preventing the growth of the crop. The similarities between this poem and Emily's 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?' continue as Christina argues that the country cannot flourish in the midst of conflict and war soon leads to famine: 'is there nought to reap in the day of harvest? | Hath the wine in her day no fruit to yield?' (ll.7-8) These lines highlight the ceaseless suffering which arises in war, but also the lack of fruit can be interpreted as a mirror of Gabriele's argument that country's intellect is 'displayed' in its fruits – by fighting, the countrymen are displaying the absence of reason, which Gabriele maintains is a persistent cause of war: '<Who, expelling evil, has respected good; | So that the authority of reason may | Exorcise out of good aught evil thing.>' (72) Moreover, the absence of fruit is an embodiment of the 'fruitlessness' of the Franco-Prussian Campaign. Kings and Generals are a destructive force for Christina,

[237] Genesis 4:11.

sacrificing the lives of younger men to increase their territories. Subsequently, Christina's poem contains a call-to-arms for her fellow women, asking them to protect Mother Earth; motherland and their sons. This sense of duty is echoed in Christina's 1893 exegesis *The Face of the Deep,* which states: 'we are constituted our brother's keeper, our brother's safety similarly lies in our plainly calling him a destroyer.[238] The language here mimics the Cain and Abel narrative yet again – 'And the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother? And he said, "I do not know: am I my brother's keeper?"'[239] – Christina depicts masculinity as embodying the 'chaos' of Apocalypticism, while femininity represents the 'relief'. Christina admonishes those who would wage war against their "brethren" like a mother chiding her children, similar to the maternal overtones of Emily's poetry. The German-French Campaign raised images of mothers and motherland the conflict having lasted nine months. This gestation period is depicted in the 'mournful' mother earth (l.19) whose crops take some weeks to harvest' (l.3). Nonetheless, both female relatives of the soldiers, mother Earth and motherland are abandoned: 'Mournful Mother, prone in dust weeping | Who shall comfort thee?' (ll.19-20) – 'who pitieth thee | From sea to sea?' asks the speaker. Each of these female figures "gave birth" to these men and are now forced to watch them die. The often forgotten female bystanders were lamented equally in *A Versified Autobiography*, as Gabriele asks: 'How many mothers o'er their slaughtered sons | Wept on the shore' (72). The families are not forsaken by God, Christina argues, and nor are the sins of man: 'God hears their cry, and though He tarry, yet | He doth not forget.' (ll.17-18) Much like the Brontës' apocalyptic allegories, Christina encourages humankind to face their sins before the Final Judgement, else their next battle will be with the almighty: '"Vengeance is Mine, is Mine," thus saith the Lord – | O Man put up thy sword.' (ll.35-36)

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[238] Christina Rossetti, *The Face of the Deep: A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1893), p.264.
[239] Genesis 4:9.

The combination of Gabriele's real-life experience and Christina's religious allegories paints a vivid, God-fearing depiction of war. It is intriguing, however, that the portions of Gabriele's autobiography that Christina emulates most are predominantly those which William Michael would later omit in his 1901 edit of the work. To prepare his father's work for publication, William Michael translated the original Italian and heavily redacts a high volume of his words, including many of his pacifist declarations. It is not clear why William Michael repeatedly omits these portions from the published result – although as an editor, he does remove many extracts where Gabriele is distracted from his anecdotes, for example when describing his work as a curator:

> <And I can pique myself on words and acts
> Befalling there; but here I leave them blank,
> For he grows tedious who would speak of all,
> And makes a hotchpotch of his narrative.
> […] "I was in the Museum" – ask no more!> (17)

Brevity is not Gabriele's strong suit; however, William Michael appears to intentionally remove a great majority of his graphic descriptions of war and elegises the fallen soldiers. When we examine other fragments William Michael forgoes, there are two potential reasons for this. Firstly, he wanted his father to be remembered as a rebel whose steadfast beliefs caused his exile[240]; hence William Michael did not want to show Gabriele casting too much doubt on whether the costs of rebellion are worth it. While describing the casualties of the Austrian and French invasions should show a reader why Gabriele and his fellow Carbonari felt they should rebel against tyranny, William Michael appears to choose not to show the graphic violence of war so the further violence of the rebellion can be somewhat justified. As

[240] For instance, although Gabriele was not strictly antimonarchical, William Michael omits parts of story where he meets the Prince Royal of Denmark – later King Christian 8 – at the museum, which could lead to him being accused of pro-royalist feeling. He removes Gabriele's proud declaration that the Prince shook hands with him, and when he writes that the Prince asked a favour of him (to present a copy of his poem to the Princess of Denmark) William Michael cuts Gabriele's reply: '<Your Highness's desire would be a command to me.>' (26)

an editor, William Michael knew Gabriele's claims against conflict breeding further conflict would seem hypocritical when discussing the Carbonari movement. (26) Secondly, William Michael wished to portray his father as a pillar of strength and thus removes any signs of physical – cutting the line referencing Gabriele lamentation of his blindness: 'I was a lynx, and have become a mole' (11) – emotional or psychological "weakness". His intention is not to make Gabriele seem unsympathetic or hyper-masculine but to fulfil his father's original intention when he chose to write his memoirs - to restore his former strength and confidence. William Michael believed that Gabriele should be a respected writer in his own right and wished to show audiences the father he knew.[241] Consequently, he chose to restrict readers from comparing Gabriele to any other writer by superseding his father's chosen structure of naming his chapters 'Cantos' – seemingly to avoid comparisons with Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy.*[242] Although he includes Gabriele's note 'Ovid's own native soil is mine as well' (6), William Michael removes Gabriele's justification of his *Autobiography* by comparing himself to the great writer: '<If others too have done the self-same thing, | Their precedent may clear me free of blame.>' (6) William Michael desired that his father's voice be the strongest in his biography.

'How much do I owe you,' writes Dante Gabriel to his father, 'and how much trouble have I given you, dearest Father, in this and in all matters!'[243] His sentiments could easily be expressed by both sets of Brontë and Rossetti siblings to their patriarchs for the multifaceted sources of inspirations both they and their work provided. Patrick Brontë's political and religious sentiments are echoed in the pages of his children's Glass Town juvenilia, from

[241] William Michael's method of showing the family members as he knew them, rather than how their admirers perceived them, was the basis of many of his family biographies – as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

[242] In another instance of avoiding too much comparison with Gabriele's favourite writer, when Gabriele describes the '<Angelic butterfly that in me liv'st | Flutter thy wings, and poise under some flower. | Rise from the squalid and funeral shade: | See, see the lovely blooms! Be there thy rest.>' The butterfly is, according to William Michael's footnotes, from Dante: '<He assimilates the soul to a butterfly, developed out of a grub, the body X [sic.] – W.>' (77) However, both lines are omitted.

[243] Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Gabriele Rossetti, 12th January 1854, *His Family-Letters,* Vol. 2 p.123.

some of the earliest Angrian tales of battling soldiers and apocalyptic clashes to the later Gondal poems lamenting the human penchant for self-destruction. Whereas Gabriele's national pride, exciting tales of exile and the consequent empathy he felt for those embroiled in war, were recreated in the experiences of both soldier and bystander in his children's fiction. Their experiences contributed to a sense of realism, and therefore pathos, in the siblings' works, which would serve them well in their professional careers. Consequently, the fathers were a continual source of collaboration – even through an indirect meta-literary cooperation with their written works – inspiration and filial affection.

CHAPTER THREE:

Exiles and Escapees: How "Feminine" Realities threatened to disengage Literary Sisters from Creative Collaboration

"Outgrowing" the Juvenilia

'We cannot conceive that as we grow up […] those objects and pursuits we now so fondly cherish […] [and] our companions will no longer join us in those childish pastimes.'[1] These words of Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) encapsulate the loyalty that both the Brontë and Rossetti siblings felt towards their co-authored juvenilia. While the siblings lived beneath the same roof, collaboration was uncomplicated but once the household was divided, as a consequence of real-life pressures, this became more difficult. We have previously studied the domestic expectations placed upon nineteenth-century women. Ironically, as the Brontë and Rossetti sisters came of age and became increasingly aware of these "ideals", their own creative domesticity was dismantled. This chapter will consider how the duties of womanhood altered the creative process and, consequently, the familial literary dynamic. It was not the traditional "models" of wife and mother to which the Brontë and Rossetti women were to aspire, as pecuniary circumstances required them to find a steady profession. Nor did Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti have to bear the standards of nineteenth-century primogeniture – which expected them to ensure the family's financial income once they came of age – instead, they were urged to remain on the path to artistic fame.[2] As a result, the daughters were required to temporarily sacrifice their own artistic desires and seek employment. Therefore, if the Victorian world was, as contemporary author Miss Ross declared, 'made up of "men, women, and governesses"'[3], the Brontë and Rossetti sisters were compelled to join the latter.

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[1] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Darlington: J.M. Dent, 1893), pp.171-172.

[2] Chapter Four of this thesis will focus on the affect these shifts in family dynamic had upon Branwell Brontë, Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti, with an increased awareness of "masculine expectation".

[3] Miss Ross, *The Governess; or, Politics in Private Life* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1836), p.1.

The governess was respected in some circles for her role in raising the next generation, but the trade itself was viewed as a wretched existence by the many authoresses who endured it. Consider the contemplations of Miss Jane Fairfax in Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816) when comparing the goverenss trade to the slave-trade: '"widely different certainly as to the guilt of those who carry it on; but as to the greater misery of the victims, I do not know where it lies.'[4] It was a career that required a woman to leave home and share the house of upper-class strangers while teaching and also monitoring the decorum of the children. Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros defines the governess as a social "in-between"; 'a wage-earning, middle-class woman in a society in which middle-class femininity was defined by domesticity and nonparticipation'.[5] The standard governess was a single young woman, preferably from a respectable family, who could educate and chaperone the daughters of their employers. These women were both within and without, and fictional depictions echo this simultaneous inclusion/exclusion. While some governess's experiences may have been far less unpleasant than those portrayed by Austen or the Brontës, it is the governess of novels who has shaped contemporary perception of the profession. Following the publications of *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *Jane Eyre* (1848), Mary Atkinson Maurice declared such *bildungsromans* 'curious' proofs of the 'present feeling towards governesses, that they are made the heroines of many popular novels.'[6] Consequently, the Brontë Sisters and this vocation have become inextricably linked in the public's perception. Collectively, Charlotte, Emily and Anne had extensive teaching careers; the limited options for the unmarried daughters of a clergyman meant that the sisters were destined for this vocation from the beginning of their education. As Charlotte would later declare: '[m]y father is a Clergyman of limited though competent

[4] Jane Austen, *Emma: A Novel in Three Volumes,* Vol.2. (London: John Murray, 1816), p.324.
[5] Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros, 'The Victorian Heroine Goes A-Governessing' (27-55) in *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers,* Ed. Brenda Ayres (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p.32.
[6] Mary Atkinson Maurice, *Governess Life: Its Trials, Duties, and Encouragements* (London: John W. Parker, 1849), p.10.

income, and I am the eldest of his children […] I thought it therefore my duty when I left school to become a Governess.'[7]

The path to governessing began in 1824 when Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte and Emily were sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. We can see from the establishment's admissions register that the Brontë sisters were educated with a view to becoming governesses.[8] [Fig.1.] The school's basic curriculum allowed the female student 'to develop her reading and expertise in certain subject areas' and yet, Hughes observes, 'shy away from anything which might suggest that she was a blue-stocking'[9], as well as impressing a God-fearing respect for religion which allowed a pupil to become that 'model of perfect Christian lady-hood': the governess.[10] Although the tragic deaths of Maria and Elizabeth in 1825 cut the surviving Brontës' "teacher-training" short, six years later Charlotte was sent to another school, Roe Head, to complete this tutelage and, as Claire Harman explains, 'three years after leaving Roe Head as a schoolgirl, Charlotte went back there to teach'.[11] It was not long until Emily and Anne would reluctantly follow in their eldest sister's footsteps. Despite her notorious dislike for Jane Austen[12], Charlotte Brontë clearly concurred with her opinions on teaching. One letter to Ellen Nussey in 1838 particularly resembles Fairfax's opinion when Charlotte relays her sister Emily's experiences as a teacher of forty students at Law Hill School, explaining that she has been given 'an appalling account of her [Emily's] duties – Hard labour from six in the morning until near eleven at night […] this is slavery I fear she will

[7] Charlotte Brontë to Robert Southey, 16th March 1837 in *The Brontës: Life in Letters*, Ed. Juliet Barker, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997), (pp. 48-50), p.48.

[8] In the Admissions Register for the Clergy Daughters' School [see Table One] Maria, Charlotte and Emily Brontë are all listed under 'For what educated' as 'governess', however this is left blank on Elizabeth Brontë's entry. It is unknown whether this was intentional or simply a clerical discrepancy. Please refer to *The Brontës: A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997), pp.6-7.

[9] Kathryn Hughes, *The Victorian Governess* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), p.14.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Claire Harman, *Charlotte Brontë: A Life* (London: Viking, 2016), p.87.

[12] To examine Charlotte Brontë's opinion on *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), which she deemed as having 'to glance of a bright vivid physiognomy', see her letter to G.H. Lewes, dated 12th January 1848, in *Life in Letters,* p.180. For her opinion on *Emma* (1815), which she declared as lacking 'anything like warmth or enthusiasm', please refer to her letter to William Smith Williams, dated 12th April 1850, in *Life in Letters,* pp.277-278.

never stand it.'[13] Emily certainly struggled with the uninspiring world of schooling, her longing to reabsorb herself entirely in her creative energies most famously embodied in her 1838 poem, 'A little while, a little while':

> A little while, a little while
>
> The noisy crowd are barred away;
>
> And I can sing, and I can smile
>
> A little while I've a holiday![14]

The repeated reminder of how little time Emily has in between teaching 'the noisy crowd' emphasises the demands of the profession, and how Emily struggled to fully immerse herself in the Gondal narrative under pressure. Living in another family's home, or a boarding school, and constantly being at the beck-and-call of one's employer and students meant that the end of the working day never truly came – as Anne's *Agnes Grey* explains: 'not to be immediately forthcoming when called for, was regarded as a grave and inexcusable offence […] the servant came in breathless haste to call me, exclaiming, "[…] the young ladies is WAITING!" Climax of horror! Actually waiting for their governess!'[15] The lack of exercise of her mental abilities, Claire O'Callaghan explains, altered Emily's physical state: 'Emily found little pleasure in the formality of learning and education at Law Hill, and by her second term, her happiness and health had deteriorated.'[16] Charlotte also recognised the consuming effect of homesickness upon Emily, noting: '[t]he change from her own home […] her own very noiseless, very secluded, but unrestricted and unartificial [sic.] mode of life, to one of disciplined routine'.[17] Hence, the slavery image used by both Austen and Charlotte is indicative of everything which teaching came to represent for the Brontës. This chapter will

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[13] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 2nd October 1838, *Life in Letters,* p.59.
[14] Emily Brontë, 'A little while, a little while (1838)' in *Emily Jane Brontë: The Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin Classics, 1992) (88-89), ll.1-4.
[15] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1837) p.99.
[16] Claire O'Callaghan, *Emily Brontë: Reappraised: A View from the Twenty-First Century* (Salford: Saraband, 2018), p.27.
[17] Charlotte Brontë, cited in Elizabeth Gaskell's, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.1. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), p.104.

analyse these associations, separation from home, and therefore the collaborative dynamic, and having to forfeit the mental efforts which had previously been dedicated to their early fiction, in order to teach "ungrateful" children. Collaboration and juvenilia were no longer simple pastimes; instead they became methods of maintaining one's self.

No.	*Girl's Name*	*Age*	*Parents' Name and Residence*	*When admitted*	*How supported*	*Diseases Had*
17	Maria Brontë	10	Patrick B Haworth near Keighley Yorkshire	1824 July 21st	Parent	Vaccinated Chicken pox Scarlet fever H.Cough
Acquirements on Entering		*Left School*	*Where gone*	*For what educated*	*General Remarks*	
Reads tolerably – Writes pretty well – Ciphers a little – Works very badly – Knows a little of Grammar very little of Geography and History. Has made some progress in reading French but knows nothing of the language grammatically		1825 Feby 14th		Governess	Left School in ill health 14 Feby died 6th May 1825. Her Father's account of her is; "She exhibited during her illness many symptoms of a heart under divine influence." – Decline.	

Figure 1. 'Transcription of the Admissions Register of the Clergy Daughters' School', Cowan Bridge, (1824-1839)

The sisters frequently alternated between who among them was sent to work, and who remained in the literary haven of home. Although their correspondence depicts the compassion and pity they felt when one or more of the sisters were removed from home, we can also see signs of both sibling and professional rivalry beginning to emerge. While the siblings naturally felt some resentment when one could remain comfortably at home – especially Branwell, whose entry into the "real-world" had been temporarily stayed so he may commence a career as an artist[18] – the "exiled" sister was also envious of her sisters who could continue with their juvenilia without the pressures of working life to distract.

[18] However, Branwell did not remain "exempt" from real-life duties or occupations, as will be explored further in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Consequently, the sisters would – often desperately – attempt to maintain their collaborative Glasstown kingdom through letters and diary extracts.

As Helen Huntingdon of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* continues to consider the loss of "trivialities" of play and childhood, she states: 'we cannot help being saddened at the thoughts of such an alteration'.[19] The end of "play", in the form of juvenilia, created a sense of authorial grief which the Rossetti sisters were also made to endure. Although their short-lived careers as educators are not as widely studied, or recalled in their fiction, Maria and Christina were equally condemned to follow their mother's example and become governesses. Once Gabriele's health grew so weak that he could no longer work, the entire family – including Frances, but not Dante Gabriel – sought occupation. Comparable to the "fate" of the Brontë sisters, the Rossetti daughters were tutored by Frances in literature, multiple languages and music, in case they were required to work as governesses. In 1845, they received their call of duty. Maria was the first to be successful in securing a job as the governess to the Marchioness of Bath. Frances followed, seeking students to coach in French and Italian. However, as Geraldine J. Clifford observes: 'Christina Rossetti, called herself an "escaped governess" for failing to follow the other Rossetti women into teaching'.[20] Her "escape" came through the concurrent blessings and curses of young age and having been diagnosed with anaemia in 1845/46. Anne Clarke Amor declares Christina's neurosis as psychosomatic, such was the horror of having to surrender her creative freedom for the governess trade: 'Christina avoided Maria's fate by pleading ill-health, which was probably feigned or imaginary, and which enabled her to stay at home writing her poetry.'[21] Although we know Christina to have been sincerely unwell, Clarke Amor's accusation does demonstrate how famous Christina Rossetti has become for her unceasing commitment to

[19] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall,* p.172.
[20] Geraldine J. Clifford, *Those Good Gertrudes: A Social History of Women Teachers in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p.7.
[21] Anne Clarke Amor, *William Holman Hunt: The True Pre-Raphaelite* (London: Constable, 1989), p.35.

her poetry. Her contribution to the family's *peripeteia* was caring for her ailing father and occasionally assisting Frances with her pupils. While Christina did recognise the 'privileges and immunities which attach to semi-invalidism'[22], her continued presence in the family home did not guarantee the continuation of the family writing. As the siblings' duties were divided, *Hodge-Podge*'s successor *The Illustrated Scrapbook* disbanded. Nevertheless, its third, public incarnation *The Germ* presented new opportunities. Established following the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, this journal of art and poetry did contain some of Christina's verses under her pseudonym, Ellen Alleyne. Although Christina was still able to write, the fact that her brothers were able to commit to an entirely new collaborative, homocentric group increased her awareness of gender inequality in the professional world.[23] With this exposure to the irretrievable dynamic of *Hodge-Podge,* where the works of Frances' sons and daughters were judged equally, Christina's authorial anxieties increased as she became hyper-conscious of female expectation, embodied in her "martyred" elder sister.

Maria Rossetti demonstrated the inherent need to support her family from an early age, as we witnessed when she cared for her siblings in Frances and Gabriele's absence in Paris.[24] Frances recognised Maria's efforts, writing a poem as testament to her sacrifice: 'My dearest Mi […] Now in her mother's absence glad givens up, | Of mental joy the soul delighting cup'.[25] Arseneau argues that, more than any of the other Rossetti siblings, 'Maria was early tutored in the lessons of self-sacrifice'[26] from childhood. In Frances' absence, Maria was the resident matriarch and she had been taught that the mother's role was to encourage and

[22] Christina Rossetti letter to Alexander Macmillan, dated 28th July 1871 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti With Some Supplementary Letters and Appendices*, Ed. William Michael Rossetti (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p.185.
[23] The role of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as an "alternative literary circle", and Christina's tenuous role within it, will be explored further in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[24] As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.
[25] Frances Rossetti, 'Maria belov'd, in fancy oft I see', c.1843 as cited in Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti,* p.21.
[26] Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti,* p.21.

inspire creativity. She thus became, as William Michael states, a 'muse in a pinafore'[27], especially for Christina. Arseneau contends that 'Maria's recognition of Christina's talents appears to have been equally crucial to her poetic development.'[28] Christina would come to depend upon Maria's editorial view, recorded as the scribe and editor of Christina's juvenile poems as early as 1842-1847. These works were 'carefully transcribed by Maria into notebooks'[29], just as Frances completed the manuscripts for *Hodge-Podge*. Furthermore, even as Christina became a highly respected poetess in her own right, she required Maria's approval and support. In one letter addressed to her publisher, dated 1860, Christina requests that she be sent the proofs of the second edition of *Goblin Market,* 'as by so doing they get the advantage of my sister's revision as well as my own'.[30] Six years later, Christina would write a similar letter, only this time she was hoping to show Maria the proofs of *Prince's Progress and Other Poems,* stating: 'I think I shall send them home for lynx-eyed research after errors, before letting them go to press.'[31] Christina's description of Maria's "lynx-eyed" proofreading ascertains that Maria was as demanding as Frances when it came to editing.

With such a discerning eye, Maria could have become as successful as her siblings; however, she would be required to relinquish her creative efforts far more categorically than her siblings. Maria, like the Brontës, felt herself exiled from the Bohemian paradise of home and, as William Michael later explained, she 'procured her first situation in the family of the Revd

[27] William Michael Rossetti on Maria: 'On the two junior children, Christina and myself, Maria exercised something like the function of an inspiring Muse in a pinafore'. *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331 (The Bodleian Library, Oxford), pp.14-15.
[28] Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti,* p.53.
[29] Mary Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.53.
[30] Christina Rossetti letter to Alexander Macmillan, dated 7th Jan 1865, in *The Letters of Christina Rossetti,* Vol.1. Ed. Antony H. Harrison, 4 vols. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.217.
[31] Christina Rossetti letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, dated 3rd March 1865 in *The Letters of Christina Rossetti,* Vol.1. p.229.

Lord and Lady Charles Thynne: the present Countess of Kenmare was her pupil'.[32] The neglect of her talents was the cause of much regret to her brothers, with Dante Gabriel writing to his mother of this injustice in 1847 when Maria was decamped to Longleat: 'poor Maggy is not to be bullied and badgered out of her life by a lot of beastly brats'.[33] Maria, however, consented to her scapegoat status, forgoing her natural skills for those 'talents which enable me to assist my dear father'.[34] In fact, it was not her literary ambitions – which her family felt her destined for – that Maria mourned most, as the need for income prevented her from achieving a "higher goal". While Christina yearned to become an "Associate Sister" of the avant-garde Brotherhood, Maria had to steadily assimilate herself into what Martha Vicinus refers to as one of 'the most important women's communities in the nineteenth century'[35], the Anglican Sisterhood. Subsequently, as with the Brontës, poetry, diaries and correspondences, her writing transformed from a childhood pastime into a form of catharsis. Writing, as Simon Marsden expresses, was now employed 'to record a self in process, to both preserve and reveal (even if only to the writer) a female identity embodied in the written text'. By engaging with the world in the safe-space of the journal, one could 'impose meaningful interpretation upon the events of one's life and to reveal and validate the coherent self that experiences them.[36] As such, the Brontë and Rossetti daughters were now not only writing for the careers they wanted, but for the professions they felt they deserved; an enterprise, suggested by Anne Brontë, of seeking 'higher aims and nobler occupations'.[37]

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[32] W. M. Rossetti, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their World* A Personal View. From Some Reminiscences and Other Writings of William Michael Rossetti. (London: The Folio Society, 1995), p.19.
[33] Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Frances Rossetti, letter dated October 1847, in *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters*, Vol.2., p.33.
[34] Maria Rossetti, c.1847 as cited in Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography* (London: W. H. Allen, 1978), p.58.
[35] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.47.
[36] Simon Marsden, 'Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* Vol.28, No.1 (2006) (35-47), p.35.
[37] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall,* p.172.

The World Without: From Collaboration to Catharsis

A decade before Charlotte Brontë's first teaching position – and prior to the establishment of the Glasstown Confederacy – the siblings developed a psychological association between conventional school and suffering. In 1825, Charlotte regrettably assumed the role of eldest child when the persistent epidemics and detrimental living conditions of their school, Cowan Bridge, resulted in the death of her elder sisters, Maria and Elizabeth.[38] Charlotte therefore felt a bitter irony that she was forced to return to a school environment. As Juliet Barker rationalises, one year's schooling at Cowan Bridge 'could hardly equip her to find a good post'.[39] Therefore, fourteen-year-old Charlotte was sent to finish her education at Roe Head School, twenty miles from the Parsonage. Barker questions why Patrick would select Miss Wooler's school when there were many closer to home, determining 'the choice must have been dictated by Patrick's personal knowledge of the place', Roe Head being about half an hour from Patrick's former church at Hartshead.[40] Nevertheless, Charlotte was tentative when she arrived on 17th January 1831[41]; moreover the distance from home had a profound effect on her psyche. Charlotte approaches her school studies valuing literature above all else, the same mentality she and her siblings implemented in their lessons at home, as her classmate Mary Taylor remembered: Charlotte 'was acquainted with most of the short pieces of poetry that we had to learn by heart, would tell us the authors, the poems they were

[38] The sisters' miseries became synonymous with the impersonal routine of established education, represented in *Jane Eyre* by the appalling Lowood Orphans' Asylum:'When the tyhus fever had fulfilled its mission of devastation […] Inquiry was made into the origin […] The unhealthy nature of the site; the quantity and quality of the children's food […] the pupils' wretched clothing and accomodations – all these things were discovered'. (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1847), p.51.)

[39] Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.197.

[40] Ibid., p.199.
Patrick also had the benefit of having the Reverend Thomas Atkinson and his wife, Charlotte's godparents, living only half a mile away, therefore able to keep an eye on his daughter and prevent the subterfuge perpetrated by Cowan Bridge.

[41] As fellow student Mary Taylor recalled: 'She looked a little, old woman, so short-sighted that she always appeared to be seeking something'. Mary Taylor letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, dated 18th January 1856 in *Mary Taylor: Friend of Charlotte Brontë: Letters from New Zealand and Elsewhere,* Ed. Joan Stevens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp.157-158.

taken from, and sometimes repeat a page or two'.[42] Although she was an outwardly good pupil, Charlotte largely rejected the rigid curriculum. Ellen Nussey recollects how Charlotte 'liked the stated task to be over, that she might be free to pursue her self-appointed ones'[43], those being her reading and writing. Charlotte was determined to maintain her juvenilia during her time at Roe Head as both student and teacher, approaching the escapism from her duties as a young woman with a sense of desperation, and what Elizabeth Gaskell refers to as: 'the idea of creative power carried to the verge of insanity.'[44]

When Charlotte initially left home to begin her studies, neither she, nor her Angrian co-creator Branwell, would allow the Angrian narrative to suffer following the divide of its Genii. While Charlotte's duties increased as her career began, she turned to Branwell to maintain the Angrian momentum, and sustain her "sanity": 'About a week since I [Charlotte] got a letter from Branwell containing a most exquisitely characteristic epistle from Northangerland to his daughter […] I lived on its contents for days.'[45] Branwell helped to nurture Charlotte's own stories as she struggled to find inspiration within the schoolroom, through missives such as these and the reintegration of the individual ideas during the holidays. The Brontë collaboration did not completely halt upon Charlotte's removal. This is not to say Branwell did not come to take advantage of the literary freedom which came from becoming the principal contributor to the Angrian kingdom. As Victor Neufeldt observes, Branwell initially appears 'stymied by Charlotte's absence' since there is no record of him having written anything between June 1831 and March 1832.[46] Branwell soon recovers and seizes the opportunity to rewrite many Angrian storylines. As the teenage Branwell increasingly

[42] Mary Taylor letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, dated 18th January 1856, *Letters from New Zealand and Elsewhere,* pp.158-159.
[43] Ellen Nussey, 'Reminiscences' *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One, 1829-1847,* Ed. Margaret Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.59.
[44] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, Eds. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Mandolin, 1997), p.398.
[45] Charlotte Brontë, 'Roe Head Journal' (Entry 6) in *Tales of Glasstown* (173-174),p.173.
[46] Victor Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy. Part 1', *Brontë Studies,* 42:3 (2017) (190-210), p.195.

modelled his characters upon hyper-masculine Byronic heroes, the apparent displacement of Charlotte allowed him to 'counteract the monarchical emphasis of the narrative'[47] and transform Charlotte's intelligent female characters into the 'loved and lovely one[s]'[48] of his heroes.[49] Previously in this thesis, we established the delicate balance of the teenage Charlotte's Romanticism and Branwell's gritty battle narrative. Once the siblings were separated, however, this fragile equilibrium shifted in Branwell's favour. A thematic rift occurred, as Branwell had greater time to commit to his "masculine" submissions. The subsequent disparity of their storylines led to the once friendly authorial rivalry intensifying, heightened by Charlotte's fears of her own writing being forgotten. Throughout her time at Roe Head, Charlotte simultaneously envies her siblings who remained at home, and dreads that she had been effectively exiled from both Glasstown and the all-inspiring Parsonage:

> That wind pouring in divine, silent, unseen land of thought...that wind I know is heard at this moment far away on the moors at Haworth. Branwell & Emily hear it and as it sweeps over our house down the churchyard & round the old church, they think perhaps of me & Anne.[50]

Note how Anne is included amongst the "exiles" of Roe Head - when Charlotte became a teacher there, the headmistress Miss Wooler had in fact offered to give *Emily* an education free of charge as long as Charlotte worked.

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[47] Victor Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy. Part 1', p.195.

[48] Branwell Brontë quoting Lord Byron, p.176 in 'Chapter II' 22nd October 1835 (165-185) 'The Life of Feild Marshal the Right Honourable Alexander Percy. [sic.] Earl of Northangerland […] By Sir John Walter Bud.' Vol.2., *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë: 1834-1836,* Vol.2 Ed. Victor A. Neufeldt (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999), p.176.

[49] This engendered alteration will be explored from Branwell's perspective in Chapter Four of this thesis.
This is not the sole reimagining of Charlotte's characters Branwell undergoes, the most dramatic being the amalgamation of her character 'Rougue' and Northangerland himself, as will also be analysed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[50] Charlotte Brontë, 'Roe Head Journal' (Entry 4) (165-167), p.166.
This entry was written while Anne was a student herself at Roe Head, hence the mention of her name. The effect this division had upon Anne's own writing will be analysed later in this chapter.

The further relief of Emily's upkeep would have helped their father's penury, thus in the summer of 1835 Charlotte wrote to Ellen Nussey: 'Emily and I leave home on the 29th of this month, the idea of being together consoles us both somewhat'.[51] However, Juliet Barker argues that 'Emily was too set in her ways to surrender to the discipline of Roe Head'[52] – an obstinacy which would later end her brief career as a tutor at Law Hill School. Emily found the world 'hopeless' without 'the world within' which she 'doubly prize[d]'[53] – she could not thrive in the real world of work because she preferred the fictional realm she and her siblings created, and the freedom of her childhood moors. 'Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils,' Charlotte declared, 'without it, she perished.'[54] The eldest Brontë sister was forced to watch as Emily became a shadow of her former-self within the classrooms of Roe Head: '[e]very morning when she woke the vision of home and the moors rushed on her […] In this struggle her health was quickly broken […] I felt in my heart she would die, if she did not go home.'[55] Undoubtedly, recollections of their lost sisters, Maria and Elizabeth's, suffering at Cowan Bridge caused Patrick to have Emily returned home immediately. Nevertheless, Miss Wooler would not leave the sisters be and in October 1835 reiterated that Charlotte was expected to provide a new pupil for the school. Thus 'if Emily could not cope', as Samantha Ellis explains, 'Anne had to go in her place'[56].

Ever obedient, Anne must have felt like the sacrificial lamb and she certainly kept quiet at Roe Head. Anne's presence in the abovementioned diary extract can therefore be interpreted as a statement of sisterly solidarity, not wishing Anne to suffer as Emily did. Unfortunately, by 1837 Anne was experiencing a physical and psychological break. Suffering

[51] Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, dated 2nd July 1835 in Margaret Smith (ed.) *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One*, p.140.
[52] Juliet Barker, ed. *The Brontës: Life in Letters* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997), p.31-32.
[53] Emily Brontë, 'To Imagination (1844)' in *Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari (19-20): 'So hopeless is the world without | The world within I doubly prize.', ll.7-8.
[54] Charlotte Brontë (c.1850), 'Prefatory Material to Emily Brontë's Poems' cited in Nick Holland, *In Search of Anne Brontë* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016), p.79.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Samantha Ellis, *Take Courage: Anne Brontë and the Art of Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2017), p. 124.

from such severe bouts of asthma, Nick Holland describes how 'mental anguish was building to a physical collapse […] unable to keep any food or liquid down and suffered prolonged episodes of terrible pain'.[57] Her eldest sister was determined that Anne would not meet the same fate as Maria and Elizabeth, and Barker describes how Charlotte, thinking that Miss Wooler was treating the matter too lightly, had a blazing row with her headmistress which resulted in the Brontës returning home'[58]. 'I told her one or two rather plain truths –', Charlotte relates to Ellen Nussey, 'which set her crying […] unknown to me she wrote to Papa – telling him that I had reproached her – bitterly – taken her severely to task &c. &c. [sic.]'[59] She would not apologise for the instinct to save her sister.

Although Charlotte's mentality was equally affected by her time at Roe Head, she endured her role there far longer than either of her sisters.[60] Without the inspirations of home and family, Charlotte attempted to continue her art and writing with both time and motivation frequently only blessing her when she returned home; as Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars observe: '[Charlotte] drew little during the school term. All her drawings during these teaching years are dated near or during the holidays, and they decrease in number.'[61] Her writing suffered in equal measure with the new rigidity of her surroundings: 'I should like to write something,' she says in her journal; 'I can't enter into a continued narrative – my mind is not settled enough for that'.[62] Her evident frustration at the unceasing nature of her position increases with every entry: 'Hohenlinden! Childe Harold! Flodden Field! …Why cannot the blood rouse the heart, the heart wake the head, the head prompt the hand to do

[57] Holland, *In Search of Anne Brontë,* p.85.
[58] Barker, *A Life in Letters,* p.54.
[59] Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, letter dated 4th January 1838 in Barker, *Life in Letters,* p.55.
[60] Emily and Anne had far less experience of the classroom than Charlotte, which may have contributed to their homesickness – with Emily having only spent seven months as a child at Cowan Bridge School herself, and Anne being so well protected that she knew nothing of school beyond her home lesson.
[61] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, Eds. *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.57.
[62] Roe Head Journal (Entry 2) (160-162), p.160.

things like these? Stuff Pho!'[63] During breaks in the term, when Charlotte returns to the Parsonage, she recovers some of her previous authorial drive, however her recaptured control of the narrative was lost with each return to Roe Head. Branwell, meanwhile, continued the Angrian wars. This sense of expulsion and lack of agency in one's own narrative is consequently echoed in her Angrian heroines, who increasingly become extensions of their "banished" author.

The 1830s were a tumultuous time for Charlotte Brontë, which resulted in some of her most autobiographical character re-imaginings. Similarly, the years 1849-50 were equally frenetic for Christina Rossetti and, much like Charlotte, she felt impelled to decide which direction her life would take. In hindsight, it is difficult to imagine Christina as anything other than a poet, but – where Charlotte reluctantly occupied the feminine vocation of "teacher/governess" – Christina during this period was divided between various duties: nursemaid to her father, teaching assistant to her mother, Tractarian worshipper, and fiancé to James Collinson. Nevertheless, for the teenage Christina, there was one occupation which surpassed the rest, poet. As such, her role as "Queen of the Pre-Raphaelites" following her publication in *The Germ* was ideal.[64] Emma Mason stresses the sense of opportunity *The Germ* presented for Christina, especially when viewed through her Tractarian faith: 'The Brotherhood's focus on a vibrant and luminous natural world spoke to the ideal of a harmonious cosmos Rossetti envisioned through her faith.'[65] On the other hand, we must remember that the Pre-Raphaelites declared themselves "a Brotherhood", a fraternity in which Christina could only be considered an "honorary member". To make matters worse, *The Germ* itself was beginning to cease publication by 1849; as such the forum in which she

[63] Roe Head Journal (Entry 4), p.166.

[64] William Michael acknowledges that Christina bore this moniker later in her career, but not necessarily in the origin days of the Brotherhood. He stated the name was 'a mere invention *apres coup*; but certain it is that she might without much unreason have been so called, and that no one else could, in the dawning P.R.B. days, have disputed that title with her.' William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp.74-75.

[65] Emma Mason, *Christina Rossetti: Poetry, Ecology, Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.76.

presented her poetry was becoming obsolete.[66] However, her connection to the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren was solidified, not only by the fact her brothers founded the group, but through her engagement to fellow P.R.B. member, James Collinson. William Michael proudly recalls when Collinson was introduced to the seventeen-year-old Christina through an enthusiastic Dante Gabriel[67], stating he 'immediately fell in love with her – as well he might, for in breeding and tone of mind, not to speak of actual genius or advantages of person, she was markedly his superior.'[68] Albeit his initial proposal in 1848 was rejected on the grounds of his conversion to Roman Catholicism, he was accepted upon his return to Anglicanism.[69] However, the combination of his then reverting once again to Catholicism in 1850 and what Mason refers to as his 'rejection of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and general dreariness'[70], lead to a severing of the engagement. Christina's role as a fiancée – and potentially a Pre-Raphaelite sister – came to an end. The end of the engagement created new anxieties for Christina, a fear that her connection to artistic circles would be damaged, meaning her career would suffer. The apparent indissolubility of female duties and creativity was one Christina had not experienced before in her progressive household, in which male and female art were deemed equal. As a result, in a short space of time, Christina was made to measure her commitment to her art, her religion and her feminine obligations. She

[66] To analyse the Brotherhood's approach to Christina's inclusion in *The Germ,* please refer to Chapter Four of this thesis.

[67] Many critics and biographers believe Dante Gabriel "arranged" this match. D. M. R. Bentley notes how Collinson 'proposed to Christina "sometime during October" 1848, a little after Dante Gabriel Rossetti (who also knew him from the Royal Academy schools, where they were both students) proposed him for a membership of the Brotherhood.', 'The Principal Pre-Raphaelite Pictures of James Collinson', *Victorian Review* (John Hopkins University Press), Vol.30, No.1. (2004) (21-43), p.21. The coinciding of these events, and Dante Gabriel's role in Christina and Collinson's betrothal, will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis – specifically, how this affected Christina and Dante Gabriel's personal and professional relations.

[68] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1, p.72.

[69] Although Christina was not abjectly against Catholicism – as Dorothy Margaret Stuart observes: 'It would have been strange if Christina, three-fourths Italian as she was, had had any narrow anti-Roman bias.' *Christina Rossetti* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1971), p.29, and William Michael himself stated Christina 'certainly had no strong prejudice against Roman Catholics; she consider them to be living branches of the True Vine […] although in error upon some point.' – it seems that her initial rejection was 'chiefly influenced by the consideration that difficulties […] would be sure to arise if there were offspring of the marriage.' William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1, p.72.

[70] Mason, *Christina Rossetti: Poetry, Ecology, Faith*, p.39.

attempted to process these heightened anxieties, particularly her increased awareness of gender difference, in her first attempt at long fiction which emerged during this era: the 1850 novella *Maude.*[71]

Figure 2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Christina G. Rossetti' (circa.1848) from *Maude: A Story for Girls* Ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: James Bowden, 1897) [Image of the Author]

The plot follows the eponymous Maude, who spends every free moment contentedly composing verse. However, as she is exposed to alternative embodiments of womanhood in the form of friends and family, fifteen-year-old Maude experiences a crisis of 'self'. William Michael Rossetti identified how Maude's *quatervois* parallels the personal and professional crossroads Christina reached in 1850 in 'her attitude towards her social circle and her religious obligations.'[72] As both branches of Christina's life expanded, they were being increasingly tested. Maude undergoes a similar re-evaluation, and William Michael observes how the lines between autobiography and fiction blur throughout her story: 'If some readers opine that all this shows Christina Rossetti's mind to have been at that date overburdened with conscientious scruples, of an extreme and even a wire-drawn kind, I share their

[71] Christina Rossetti, 'Maude' in *Christina Rossetti: Poems and Prose,* Ed. Simon Humphries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.265-298. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically. This work was originally published by its editor William Michael Rossetti as *Maude: A Story for Girls* (London: James Bowden, 1897). However, due to copyright issues many of the original poems contained within Christina's manuscript were omitted in this edition. As a result, this thesis will predominantly use the abovementioned text.

[72] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude: A Story for Girls* (London: James Bowden, 1897), 'Prefatory Note', p.viii.

opinion.'[73] 'Extreme' does encapsulate the standards which Maude imposes upon herself in both writing and religion, as this chapter will explore. Her language is hyperbolic, to the extent that, when the novella was finally published by William Michael in 1897, his 'Prefatory Note' reads as a caveat, reminding readers that the piece is a 'juvenile performance' although 'agreeably written, and not without touches of feminine perception and discernment.'[74] He begs of Christina's 'indulgent' public to recognise her teenage writing did not possess the seasoned talent of the poet they admired, nevertheless '[t]he literary reputation of Christina Rossetti is now sufficiently established to make what she wrote interesting to many persons — if not for the writing's own sake, then for the writer's.'[75] William Michael appears relieved that this novella had not been published sooner, as it does not compare to her later abilities. His forewarnings are not required to perceive the youth and fragile mind-set of both protagonist and author. Throughout the novella, if Maude inadvertently pays greater attention to her poetry over her piety, or vice versa, she mentally reprimands herself with 'many unfavourable comments, from herself and from her strict-minded authoress.'[76] The climax of Maude's introversion comes as she denies herself the right to attend church, deeming herself unworthy. Maude, like her authoress, cannot be perceived as "ungodly" – their heightened concerns over how to become more spiritual attest to this – however, her moral exploration mimics a significant event which occurred when Christina was also fifteen. In 1845, the first Anglican Order for Women was founded in London, as Jan Marsh remarks, 'close to the church where the Rossetti women worshipped, and where the Sisters of Mercy attended services dressed in their distinctive habits'.[77] So, Christina and her sister Maria were offered an alternative vocation of womanhood, one which Maria would pursue for the rest of her life. These sisterhoods and their duties are

[73] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude,* p.ix.
[74] Ibid, p.viii.
[75] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude: A Story for Girls,* 'Prefatory Note', p.viii.
[76] Ibid., p.ix.
[77] Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p.36.

explored in *Maude,* most notably in the character of Sister Magdalen, as William Michael notes: '[o]ne can trace in this tale that she was already an adherent of the advanced High Church Party in the Anglican Communion, including Conventional Sisterhoods.'[78] This lifestyle effectively eradicated the "care of men" from women's everyday lives, as John Shelton Reed observes, the Sisterhoods 'replaced ties to fathers, husbands, and brothers by loyalties to church and sisterhood. It demonstrated that there were callings for women of the upper and middle classes other than those of wife, daughter and, what John Shelton Reed terms, the "charitable spinster".'[79] The usurpation of men and the patriarchy, for the Rossettis especially, meant finally being free of the duties of caring for the men in their lives. Christina was required to care for Gabriele – and William Michael, to a lesser extent, as he remained at home – while Maria was made to work whilst Dante Gabriel contently continued with his artistic studies. This may explain the complete absence of male characters in *Maude.* Although men are mentioned, none are seen and none speak. By removing any external stimuli such as the expectations of fathers, brothers and husbands, the female characters in Maude are free to consider their options, driven solely by what they deem right. This gynocentric atmosphere is comparable to that of the Anglican Sisterhoods, who offered a life without patriarchal interference. Frederick S. Roden observes how these devout groups threatened to offer a truly divine alternative to the 'angel of the house' ideal, however '[t]he notion that the single devotional life could be holier than the married state incited "nervous reactions" […] concerning gender in this culture'.[80] Sisterhoods threatened to displace the patriarchy, which should appeal to the introverted and unattached Maude, except she finds herself divided between becoming empowered by religion or art.

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[78] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude*, pp.ix-x.

[79] John Shelton Reed, '"A Female Movement": The Feminisation of Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Catholicism' in *Anglican and Episcopal History,* No.57 (1988) (199-238), pp.230-231.

[80] Frederick S. Roden, 'Sisterhood is Powerful: Christina Rossetti's *Maude*' in *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the 'Angel in the House',* Eds. A Hogan, Anne and Andrew Bradstock (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998) (63-77), p.63.

Though she felt much less guilty about this fact, Charlotte experienced a similar reluctance to accept one career. She clung to her former writings and, consequently, Branwell's correspondence. Intriguingly, when the then-teacher Charlotte received Branwell's abovementioned 'epistle of Northangerland to his daughter', she described Branwell's story as 'characteristic' of the Angrian hero. Perhaps this is a sly confirmation that this story follows Charlotte's creative vision in spite of Branwell's Byronic re-imaginings. Alternatively, this can be interpreted as an envious observation that Branwell has seemingly succeeded in separating his own anxieties from that of the characters. One character whose personality wanes under Charlotte's melancholy is Mary Percy.[81] This Duchess of Zamorna, Queen of Angria, and daughter of Northangerland, was once a sparkling debutante unafraid to defend her father to his enemies: 'My [Mary's] father has been wronged sire, vilely and wickedly wronged. […] O, sire! He is worth all the jackals that throng round you [Zamorna] now […] while his detractors are inferior to the dust your foot has prest. [sic.]'[82] Ratchford notes how Mary remarkably opposes her own husband, the Duke of Zamorna and nemesis of Northangerland, 'hold[ing] her husband against his purpose of revenge.'[83] However, Charlotte's depiction of her heroine alters greatly according to the varying demands of teaching. In a sketch circa.1833-1835 titled 'Landscape with figure of a lady' [Fig.3.], an Angrian woman is standing in profile, although her features are indistinguishable. We can discern that her head is raised upwards, looking towards the sky, and that she is wearing a veil over her head. Her pose and attire, as well as the dark colours used, imply she is in mourning for something or someone. Ratchford believes this figure to be Mary Percy due to 'her meditative pose and the suggestion of loneliness in the drawing'[84]; consequently the drawing must follow on from Mary's husband Zamorna's threat to punish Northangerland

[81] A character previously discussed in Chapter One.
[82] Charlotte Brontë, *My Angria and the Angrians* (October 1834) in *The Juvenilia of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë,* Ed. Frances Beer (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986) (231-244), p.237.
[83] Fannie Ratchford, *The Brontës' Web of Childhood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p.120.
[84] Alexander and Jane Sellars*, The Art of the Brontës,* p.213.

through his daughter. Mary is exiled to Alnwick for her safety, and there she 'is pining away for news'[85] of both her father and husband. Charlotte's contemplations of the Duchess during this period are not always from the point of view of Mary herself, instead Charlotte empathises with her solitude, and encourages the Queen to be courageous – reflecting her own need for resilience upon Mary Percy: 'She's [Mary] by herself now in a large, lofty room that thirty years ago used to look as bright & gay as it now looks lone and dreary […] seated at that table medi[t]ating how to save her pride & crush her feelings?'[86] Mary has become a pawn in her family's survival, much as Charlotte felt herself martyred in order to help her family's income. Art imitates life as the sketch of a young woman wandering aimlessly through the landscape; unresponsive to her surroundings as she yearns for news from home, mimics the uninspired Charlotte's separation from her family as she awaits letters from her siblings, most significantly, Branwell. Unfortunately, it was not only her divided loyalties to Zamorna and Northangerland which leads to the subsequent tragedy in Mary Percy's story, but the authorial rift between Charlotte and Branwell. Evidently, Branwell had forewarned his co-author of his desire to remove Mary from the narrative as, while yet again "trapped" in a classroom at Roe Head, Charlotte contemplates: 'I wonder if Branwell has really killed the Duchess. Is she dead? Is she buried? Is she alone in the cold earth on this dreary night[?]'[87] Anxieties of abandonment and being 'quite forsaken'[88] surface as Charlotte laments the possible end of Mary Percy, and though one imagines Charlotte could simply request that he leave the character alone, she seems powerless to stop Branwell. Her reaction demonstrates the authority Branwell had assumed in her absence, and the lack of time Charlotte had to prevent him. As expected, Mary Percy dies on 19th September 1836, much to Charlotte's horror. The heroine did not meet Branwell's requirements for his re-established narrative. While Charlotte found catharsis in projecting her struggles upon Mary, Branwell effectively

[85] Ratchford, *The Brontës' Web of Childhood*, p.120.
[86] Roe Head Journal (Entry 4), pp.166-67.
[87] Roe Head Journal (Entry 4), p.166.
[88] Ibid.

sacrifices the character in order to spur the revenge-narratives of her father and husband. Neufeldt argues that with the boyish Branwell as the primary author 'civil war [in Angria] is inevitable […] Branwell remains focused on Northangerland as insurrectionist and outlaw […] [therefore] Northangerland will eventually lead a coup to overthrow Zamorna, but at the cost of his daughter's life, Zamorna's wife.'[89] The protracted death of Mary Percy signalled the steady expiry of Charlotte and Branwell's Angrian collaboration.

Figure 3. Charlotte Brontë, 'Landscape with figure of a lady'
(Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa. 1833-35)

'The partnership between Charlotte and Branwell,' Alexander and Juliet McMaster observe, 'slowly disintegrated as their […] aesthetic vision changed with maturity.'[90] Female characters under Branwell's supervision progressively lost their individuality in favour of increasing the stakes for the male heroes; their lives, loves and deaths being utilised to inspire their men into action. The portrayal of Mary Percy's Death in 'The Life of Feild Marshal the Right Honourable Alexander Percy, [sic.] Earl of Northangerland […] By Sir John Walter Bud'[91] is somewhat romantic, if prolonged, as both author and soon-to-be-deceased are concerned solely with how her death will shape Northangerland's story. Mary diminishes from the vibrant woman of Charlotte's earlier writings to the 'image of death' (187), rendering her a motif. Yet it is Northangerland, who watches over her deathbed, who is

[89] Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy. Part 1', p.203.
[90] Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, Eds. *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.xliii.
[91] Ibid.

portrayed most sympathetically, his appearance mirroring the waning health of his daughter: '[h]e seemed completly [sic.] withered and silent from Dreadful torment' (188) as his face grew 'pale and his head as drooped as her own' (187). [Fig.4.] His language in this scene is not the reassuring tones of a father but rather cries 'in a hollow voice' '"Mary Mary [sic.] […] How! How! Can I part from thee[?]"' (188), foreshadowing Heathcliff's outwardly selfish concerns upon visiting Cathy's sickbed: 'Oh Cathy! Oh, my life! How can I bear it?'[92] Equally, as Cathy Earnshaw would come to respond 'I wish I could hold you […] till we are both dead'[93], Mary laments the separation from her father and pities him in spite of her own sufferings: 'though [the] unseen is indeed awfully near – But there is something which still chains me where I am something beside [sic.] which even Heaven fluctuates in the balance you are here and I cannot bear to leave you' (187). Mary reassures her father that his inherent heroism will help him in his grief: 'you have far too Mighty [sic.] a spirit and feelings far too divine for God after laying a dreadful burden on you in this Life – to doom you to eternal misery in that which is to come.' (187) Though the obedient Mary contemplates the 'unseen', Northangerland denies the possibility of an eschatological reunion, disconnecting Mary's death entirely from the 'romantic' death of her mother:

> This was not like the death-bed of her mother; there was no mingling of heaven with earth, nothing of that angelic hope of glory, that real triumph over death. This was the end of a child of earth and perishing on being torn away from it.[94]

The newfound atheism of Northangerland increases the misfortune of Mary's death, as well as allowing Branwell to further omit any sense of what Neufeldt terms, 'fanciful romance'[95]. Believing they will not be reunited in an afterlife, Northangerland's grief and subsequent vow

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[92] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* in Emily and Anne Brontë, *Wuthering Heights & Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), p.132.
[93] *Wuthering Heights,* p.133.
[94] Branwell Brontë, 'The Life of feild [sic.] Marshal the Right Honourable ALEXAN[D]ER PERCY (1834)' in *The Miscellaneous and Unpublished Writings of Charlotte and Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Eds. Thomas James Wise and John Alexander Symington, 2 Vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Shakespeare Head Press, 1936-38) Vol 2. p.219, as cited in *Art of the Brontës,* p.244.
[95] Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy. Part 1', p.194.

of vengeance against Zamorna for keeping him apart from his daughter are heightened. Consequently, the once chivalric Northangerland – who simultaneously wept and experienced a 'convulsion of spirit', 'clenched teeth' and 'defying eye' (187) fades into a brooding and bitter anti-hero 'in a Travelling cloak of Mourning Black' (189), a stylistic choice which Branwell imposes upon him for the rest of his narrative.[96] This dramatic revision of Northangerland's priorities is one Charlotte predicted when Branwell was merely considering writing-off Mary. Charlotte is aware of Branwell's new authorial approach predicting 'how hopelessly & cheerlessly she [Mary] must have died' and how her demise 'must have been to North[angerlan]d like the quenching of the last spark that averted utter darkness.'[97] While Northangerland's descent can be read as romantic, Branwell strips Mary's death of the sentimentality of her life. By divesting the story of Charlotte's romance – and fundamentally her authority – Branwell is "claiming" Mary's story and the ensuing responses of Northangerland and Zamorna: 'Mary was DEAD [sic.] and Death would have been welcome to Percy' (188). With her death comes the end of Northangerland, as Charlotte would have known him. Having served her purpose, Neufeldt observes how 'Branwell essentially abandons Percy with the death of Mary Percy and the collapse of his rebellion.'[98] With the end of the incarnation he and Charlotte had created, Branwell could pursue a new, more "masculine" reading of Northangerland on his terms alone.

[96] There is a Byronic significance, as well as a mode of mourning, to this choice of colour, which will be explained in Chapter Four of this thesis when we revisit this character, now known as 'Rougue'.
[97] Roe Head Journal (Entry 4), p.166.
[98] Victor Neufeldt, 'The child is parent to the author: Branwell Brontë' in *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf,* Eds. Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) (173-186), p.183

Figure 4. Charlotte Brontë, 'The Atheist viewing the dead body of his Wife' [copied from A. B. Clayton's lithograph of the same name, circa. 1834] (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa. 1835-1836')[99]

Charlotte resisted the detrimental effect that her removal from home and demands of work had upon her literature. She prepared to fight for her Angrian tales as she left the Parsonage on 19th December 1835 to commence her new teaching role, composing the poem 'We Wove a Web in Childhood'[100] in order to mentally prepare for the time-consuming nature of her profession. The verse begins with a determined and consistent structure, with set quartets fitting the ABCB rhyme scheme:

> We wove a web in childhood,
>
> A web of sunny air
>
> We dug a spring in infancy
>
> Of water pure and fair (ll.1-4)

Whilst in her childhood home, the sun's hopeful rays shine, where 'we' – a repeated possessive reiterating the images of shared experience - dug 'spring in infancy | Of water pure and fair' (ll.3-4). The merged images of sunlight and water insinuating growth, a

[99] 'The painting was probably executed sometime in 1835 or 1836, since both Charlotte's version and the original helped to inspired Branwell Brontë's description of Mary Percy […] on her deathbed.' (Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, p.243)

[100] Charlotte Brontë, 'We Wove a Web in Childhood' in *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, Ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.151-157. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

metaphor for the simulatenous maturing of the siblings and their juvenilia. Charlotte was optimistically determined to continue the progress of their mythopeia and, in turn, she believed fiction would provide comfort from reality. Unfortunately, the incessant nature of the vocation prevented Charlotte's work: 'Am I to spend all the best part of my life in this wretched bondage, forcibly suppressing my rage at the idleness, the apathy and the hyerbolical and most asinine stupidity of these fat-headed oafs…?'[101] Consequently, the initial lines of 'We Wove a Web…', written in the sanctuary of the Parsonage, experiences a shift in tone as Charlotte imagines the horror of being far from home: 'Then sadly I long for my own dear home, | For a sight of the old familiar faces' (ll. 61-62). Biblical language is invoked again to give voice to Charlotte's more pessimistic self and her fears that work would prevent her from pursuing her own God-given talents. She alludes to another parable, 'The Call of Jeremiah', in the lines 'We cut an almond rod'. This is an echo of Jeremiah 1:11-12 which reads: 'The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?", "I see the branch of an almond tree", I replied.' In this story, as Jeremiah is called to his holy duty, he fears he is too young for the task, and the Lord reassuringly explains that Jeremiah was selected for the work before he was even conceived in the womb.[102] Hence Charlotte, by describing herself and her siblings as having 'cut an almond rod' is stating their intention to complete the work God had gifted them to fulfil, their writing, in spite of earthly duties. Nevertheless, Charlotte has 'grown up to riper age' where the almond 'tree' of the Bible has been moulded into a disciplining 'rod'. This blunt image is synonymous with tyrannical teachers, utilised in *Jane Eyre* to discipline Helen Burns, for instance: '"Hardened girl!", exclaimed Miss Scatcherd; "nothing can correct you of your slatternly habits: carry the rod away"'[103]. The rod is also a castigating image in *Villette,* brandished not by a teacher, but Reason itself: 'Reason might be right; yet no wonder we are glad at times to defy her, to rush

[101] 'Extracts from the Roe Head Journal' by Charlotte Brontë, as transcribed by Christine Alexander in *Tales of Glasstown*, (pp.151-174), p.162. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[102] Jeremiah 1.
[103] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre,* p.32.

from under her rod and give a truant hour to Imagination – *her* soft, bright foe, *our* sweet Help, our divine Hope'.[104] Teaching and Reason's triumph over Fancy were indissoluble for Charlotte, as she fears her un-nurtured talents would become 'withered in the sod? […] Are they mouldered back to clay?'' (ll.7-8, l.10) Here she is imitating the imagery of Genesis 1-2 once again to impress her anxiety that, not only will her literary progress stop entirely, but that her talents will diminish 'back to clay'. It was not blasphemous in the Brontës' minds to compare the concept of creation to one's own writing. As Marsden observes, Patrick Brontë's children would often utilise the metaphors of Evangelical narrative to 'inform and shape the subjective, imaginative experience of the world'[105], applying the familiarity of moral exegesis to help comprehend the vicissitudes of life. The of-age Brontë siblings employed a similar coping mechanism with their juvenilia.

Autobiographical writings allowed both Charlotte and Christina Rossetti to vent their discomfort in the shifting family dynamic. Where Charlotte projected her isolation upon Mary Percy, Christina explored the vicissitudes of her divided "feminine" loyalties through her eponymous *Maude.* The novella opens with a teenage girl in ill health, who appears to live only with her mother, predominantly preoccupied with writing poetry. As Maude's mother fears for her daughter's health and isolation, Mrs Foster encourages her daughter to visit her cousins Agnes and Mary. This chapter will explore how these sprightlier teenagers, who treat Maude's writing as a 'hobby', instigate a re-evaluation of Maude's sense-of-self as a writer. Where Agnes and Mary are idealised beautifies 'full of life and spirits […] both were well-grown and well-made, with fair hair, blues eyes and fresh complexions' (267), Maude is depicted as 'small though not positively short […] [h]er figure was slight and well-made, but appeared almost high-shouldered through a habitual shrugging stoop.' (266) Her unassuming posture reflects that of Christina's who became, as Thomas maintains, a 'black-

[104] Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (Perth: Cowan & Co., 1895), p.198.
[105] Simon Marsden, '"The Earth No Longer a Void": Creation Theology in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë', *Literature & Theology,* Vol.25, No.3 (2011) (237-251), p.237.

clad figure flitting dimly through the brilliant peacock world of the Pre-Raphaelites'[106] following a series of illnesses. Maude's health parallels her author's as she is described as suffering from a 'fixed paleness, and an expression, not exactly of pain, but languid and preoccupied to a painful degree.' (266) Each character in the novella feels inclined to comment on her ailing physicality, with her mother asking: 'you have looked so pale lately. Don't you feel quite well?', to which Maude replies 'there is not much the matter, only I am tired…Indeed there is nothing at all the matter.' (265) This sing-song tone and repetitive nature emphasise the constant infantilization of Maude and her author, the professions of wellness being read like a nursey-rhyme the protagonist can recite by heart. Her girlish cousin Mary quite literally reminds Maude of her weaknesses, fearing Maude cannot be social with them: '"I shall initiate you into all the mysteries of the place; all the cats, dogs, rabbits, pigeons, etc. […] that is, if you are inclined, for you look wretchedly pale…?"', to which Maude replies: '"quite well, and you must show me everything"' (267). Through Maude's maladies, and determination to continue in spite of them, Christina appears to be processing her own physical and mental struggle. Two years prior to the character's creation, Christina suffered from what Dinah Roe explains to be 'a catch-all diagnosis for extreme, recurring nerve pain'.[107] A "loss of bloom" began as a result of constant illness, including a case of neuralgia diagnosed in 1848.[108] Christina had once been considered infinitely prettier than Maria, resulting in envy within the elder sister who lamented: 'Christina is much prettier than I, everybody says so.'[109] While Christina in her youth was, as

[106] Frances Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Virago, 1995), pp.9-10.
[107] Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland: A Victorian Family History* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011), p.84.
[108] Frances Thomas surmises how neuralgia affected Christina's body and mind, and possibly shaped the tone of her writing, stating the symptoms of neuralgia to be 'consistent with anxiety or panic attacks; the victim hyperventilates, thus causing [a] "suffocating" feeling, and the muscles around the heart go into painful spasm, causing pains in the chest and arms. […] The second complaint is a weakness of the lungs, with consequent fears of consumption', in *Christina Rossetti: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1995), p.51.
[109] Maria Brontë as cited in R.D. Waller, *The Rossetti Family 1824-1854* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1932), p.130. This envy was previously discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Roe describes was 'the youngest, smallest and prettiest'[110], Maude recalls how 'as a child she had been very pretty; and might have continued so but for a fixed paleness.' (266) Rare signs of improved health in Maude's physicality 'if at any time she became thoroughly aroused and interested' renew hope in her mother that her daughter's former beauty is returning, observing how Maude's 'sleepy eyes would light up with wonderful brilliancy, her cheeks glow with warm colour […] she would look more beautiful that ever she did as a child. So Mrs. Foster said, and so unhappily Maude knew.' (266) Thomas emphasises how Christina was aware of her family and friends' observations of her "lost" beauty and youth, the most personal 'can be seen in a portrait Collinson made of her where she looks haunted and vulnerable'.[111] [Fig.5.] While Maude bemoans her former attractiveness, she finds comfort in her talents and writing, knowing that 'people thought her clever, and that her little copies of verses were handed about and admired.' (266) Equally, Christina recognised the 'privileges and immunities which attach to semi-invalidism'[112] as she could remain at home completing her juvenilia while her siblings were required to seek career paths. While living in the security of her mother's home seems ideal for Christina, she witnessed the multiple opportunities open to her siblings – both within and beyond artistic circles – and subsequently was reminded of her own limitations. While Maria left the house to work as a governess and found her calling volunteering for the All Saints Sisterhood, Christina remained largely at home. The homebound Christina appeared to repeatedly compare herself to the active, dutiful Maria, just as Maude is compared to the more active women of her family.

[110] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland* p.34.
[111] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.70.
[112] Christina Rossetti to Alexander Macmillan, letter dated 28th July 1871 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti With Some Supplementary Letters and Appendices*, p.185.

Figure 5. James Collinson, 'Christina Rossetti' (Private Collection, circa.1850)

Being compared was not a new experience for the Rossetti sisters, as we saw in Maria's jealously of how people evaluated her beauty against Christina's. However, their father Gabriele believed that in their modesty and piety, the sisters were a 'twin-branched fountain source'[113], equal in their spirituality. Nevertheless, as Maria began to "outgrow" her juvenilia and volunteer for charity in her spare time, it would take Christina some years to feel capable of joining her sister's altruistic efforts. By 1859, she was working tirelessly on behalf of St. Mary Magdalene House for fallen women and would ultimately link herself to her sister's convent as an Outer Sister – a volunteer who helped feed and clothe the underprivileged in the parish. Nevertheless, for some years Christina was restricted to the home while Maria could reach her full "feminine" potential as a philanthropist, a teacher and a daughter as she helped relieved some of the family's financial burden. Maude's narrative imitates the inner conflict Christina felt during this period, celebrating her creative freedom whilst watching her female kin flourish in their feminine responsibilities. The primary source of discord throughout the novella comes as Maude struggles to contribute her time to her literary work

[113] William Michael Rossetti letter to Thomas Dixon dated 16th December 1876 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p.348.

and her religion. While Maude is reverent and consistently explores how she might express her spirituality, it is poetry, not the church, which allows Maude to fully express herself and escape the tedium of her everyday life. Here we find her supposed hamartia, identified by William Michael, her vanity. 'When Maude 'had written a good poem, she felt it to be good.'[114] This appears an insignificant indulgence, yet Maude treats her pride in her work as a cardinal sin, a sin which causes her to deny herself the pleasure of attending church. In the scene in which Maude comes to this conclusion, she completes a poem which begs that:

> Vanity keepeth guard, lest good should reach
>
> Thy hardness; not the echoes from above
>
> Can rule thy stubborn feelings (280, ll. 12-14)

In summation; Maude's 'vanity' of writing poetry cannot be interrupted by the 'echoes' from Heaven. Although she hears the call of God, Maude cannot relinquish her poetry in order to devote all her leisure to His work. Maude cries: 'It is horrible to feel such a hypocrite as I do' (281), her supposed 'hypocrisy' lying in the fact her poetry, much like her author's, is predominantly a celebration of God and his power on Earth. In spite of this, Maude believes herself insufficient in devotion. Elaine Showalter argues that both Christina and Maude's attempt to alleviate their subsequent guilt by 'choosing devotional subjects served to legitimise her poetry as suitably feminine and Christian.'[115] In essence, both author and protagonist use religion as the predominant focus of their poetry in order to render the work "worthy". However, this decision is not altruistic as both women are driven by a desire to relieve their "shame". In this context, Maude's guilt is comprehensible; however Christina was not raised to believe poetry and religious devotion are irreconcilable. Frances set a strong example for her daughters that femininity, religion and art could co-exist happily in one household, indeed the Tractarian faith itself 'remained committed to a poetics in which

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[114] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude*, p.ix.

[115] Elaine Showalter, Ed. *Maude; On Sisterhoods, A Woman's Thoughts* (London: William Pickering, 1993), p.xx.

natural detail is one with the sacred.'[116] Consequently, we must question why Christina feels this division so acutely in *Maude*.

In contemporary criticism, the *Maude* narrative is steadily experiencing a critical resurgence, as Roden remarks that this novella is 'perhaps the most neglected work in her canon.'[117] Despite having been written during a defining period of Christina's life, many biographies prior to the twenty-first century frequently overlook this heavily autobiographical piece. Rebecca W. Crump clarifies why: William Michael's 1897 edition, published three years after Christina's death, 'is a greatly abridged version; eleven of the poems, and the sentences relating to those poems, are omitted due to copyright problems which William Michael Rossetti encountered.'[118] Reproduction of these poems was prevented as many had been published separately in Christina's later anthologies. Consequently, we are left with a novella of a young woman struggling to balance her feminine and familial expectations against her intense desire to write, and yet the vast majority of her verses are noticeably absent. These omissions are detrimental to the story, as well as analysis of Christina's mind-set during the production of *Maude.* As per the manuscript, in William Michael's edition Maude locks the 'Vanity of Vanities' poem into her manuscript book, Agnes – suspecting Maude has been crying – reprimands her: 'I hoped to find you fast asleep, and instead of this you have been writing in the cold.' (280) The 1897 copy stops here and shifts immediately to Agnes asking whether Maude intends to take Communion tomorrow, excluding the poem and its author's feelings of insincerity. William Michael was ill at ease with Maude's – and thereby Christina's – punishment of herself, arguing: 'I cannot see that the muck-reprehended Maude commits a single serious fault from titlepage [sic.] to finis'.[119] Nonetheless, the 'postscript' to the

[116] Mason, *Christina Rossetti: Poetry, Ecology, Faith,* p.76.
[117] Roden, 'Sisterhood is Powerful: Christina Rossetti's *Maude*' in *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture*' (63-77), p.63.
[118] Rebecca W. Crump, Ed. in Christina Rossetti, *Maude: Prose and Verse* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1976), pp.23-24.
[119] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude,* p.x.

'Vanity of Vanities' verse depicts a woman attending a church service – as Maude and her family had moments prior in the story:

> I listen to the holy antheming
>
> That riseth in thy walls continually,
>
> What while the organ pealeth solemnly
>
> And white-robed men and boys stand up to sing. (281, ll.1-4.)

Surrounded by religious pomp and circumstance, Maude's autobiographical narrator knows she should feel comfort:

> I ask my heart with a sad questioning:
>
> "What lov'st thou here?" and my heart answers me:
>
> "Within the shadows of this sanctuary
>
> "To watch and pray is a most blessed thing." (281, ll.5-8)

Although the poem expresses the belief that to be within God's house is its own reward to the devout, the narrator places herself within the 'shadows', neither participating in the service, nor entirely passive. The speaker occupies the in-between where she observes the acts of 'watching and praying', and yet does not describe herself as partaking in either. The more she describes the service, however, the clearer it becomes that the narrator is strictly observing. Thus, she responds to her heart's declaration:

> To watch and pray, false heart? it is not so:
>
> Vanity enters with thee, and thy love
>
> Soars not to Heaven, but grovelleth below. (281, ll.9-11)

Although neither Maude nor Christina can be described as 'false' in terms of piety, this poem expresses fears that the 'vanity' of surrendering to one's passions can lead to a disconnect with the divine. Although William Michael, like Agnes, maintains 'every line of these sonnets attests […] sincerity'[120], his thoughtful preface shows that this novella contains anxieties Christina could not express through any other means than through her fictional conduit.

[120] Showalter, Ed. *Maude; On Sisterhoods, A Woman's Thoughts*, p.24.

Correspondingly Maude uses the speaker of this poem to express her 'hypocrisy', as if she cannot speak her concerns aloud. Christina creates a concentric-circle structure of metaliterature.

In spite of the significant modifications these edits make to the overall story, William Michael's Prefatory Note does not inform the reader of how truncated this edition is, simply stating '[t]he MS. of the tale presents a few slight revisions made at some much later date—perhaps about 1870 or 1875.'[121] Given William Michael's estimated date for these revisions as between twenty-two and twenty-seven years prior to his publication, and that the removal of eleven poems cannot be considered 'a few slight revisions', it appears that Christina returned to this story much later in life. Moreover, it seems she made some edits to this portion of the story. The 1897s edition's omission of the 'Vanity of Vanities' results in the story moving from Agnes entering Maude's room and Maude immediately asking her if she intends to take Communion the next day, consequently, Agnes does not read the poem or assure Maude 'a hypocrite you are not.' (281) However, when Maude enquires about the Eucharist, she is described as speaking 'without replying to her cousin's speech' (281), although Agnes does not make a "speech" in this edition. It seems highly unlikely that a weathered editor like William Michael would overlook such a continuity flaw, unless he deemed this intentional by Christina.[122] It reads as if Christina altered this interaction herself, without considering whether the chapter would continue seamlessly. The estimated two-decade gap between the conception of *Maude* and these edits could demonstrate that as Christina matured – as both a woman and a writer – she "outgrew" these hyper-sensitive descriptions. William Michael appraised that these re-workings occurred in the early-mid seventies, the same time Christina's household was anticipating another alteration of the

[121] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude,* p.vii.

[122] We can see evidence of William Michael's attention to continuity in his extensive edits to Gabriele's, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), as detailed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

family dynamic. During these years, the family became acquainted with one of Maria's students Lucy Brown, daughter of Pre-Raphaelite Brother Ford Madox Brown. William Michael would eventually court Maria's charge and marry Lucy in 1874. However, he was not the only Rossetti sibling to leave Frances' house following his marriage, as William Michael recalls: 'as soon as my intended marriage had been announced, Maria acted upon a wish she had long entertained, and joined the Sisters of All Saints'.[123] The timing of Maria's final removal from home is intriguing as it demonstrates financial responsibilities were not the sole duty preventing her initiation into the Sisterhood. The Rossetti women, progressive though they may have been, also provided William Michael a comfortable home by maintaining the house. Mary Arseneau argues that the Rossetti women's homemaking provided invaluable relief which allowed William Michael to devote himself to his work – both literary and menial: 'William Michael's astounding productivity was in a large degree enabled by the very liberty from domestic duties that the traditional division of labour afforded him'.[124] As a result, 'sometimes household responsibilities denied the mother and daughters a summer holiday together, more consistently, it claimed hours away from preferred intellectual, spiritual and creative pursuits'.[125] Domesticity disturbed the Rossetti women's everyday activities as well as their career paths, as Christina rejoiced following their departure 'my Mother and I can now go about just as we please […] without any consciousness of man resourceless or shirt-buttonless left in the lurch!'[126] It is curious that she does not mention Maria's new found freedom, whilst she reaped the greatest advantage from the absence of her "resource-less" brother, perhaps this reflects how soon afterwards Maria left her mother and sister. Maria had been poised to become a nun since 1845. Thirty years later she finally became a Sister, sadly to the detriment of her biological sister's sense-

[123] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.421.
[124] Mary Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p.22.
[125] Ibid., p.22.
[126] Christina Rossetti, 'Reminiscences', in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, 2, p.36.

of-self. We can observe that Maria's entry into the Sisterhood coincided with when William Michael estimates Christina made her revisions to *Maude.* Maria's eminent departure evidently led Christina to return to this text, relating once again to Maude's crisis of faith, especially when interacting with Anglican Sisterhoods. Where Christina showed signs of sibling and professional contention as Maria devoted herself entirely to God, Maude feels herself inferior to a friend named Magdalen Ellis who, although not Maude's equal in writing or beauty, her piety causes her to tower 'above her sex with horrid height' (271). The confessional writing style echoes the subsequent guilt both Maude and Christina felt for being unable to commit entirely to their religion, like Magdalen and Maria.

Christina Rossetti feared poetry could potentially be a distraction from a more pious purpose, whereas the Brontës believed God could be observed by appreciating and nurturing his gifts, their dexterity in writing being amongst them.[127] Sally Shuttleworth distinguishes Charlotte's devotion to her early writings by the creative freedom embodied in the juvenilia: '[w]riting pre-eminently for herself and Branwell, rather than a public audience, she was able to range freely outside the conventional structures of writing, exploring and testing the boundaries of Victorian literary realism.'[128] Once reality had made Charlotte aware of how '[d]iscipline and regulation formed the keynotes of the general culture'[129], Shuttleworth discerns, the more frequently she tried to return to the liberal realm of Angria. Increasingly Charlotte feared her sibling collaboration would grow as fragile as a 'web in childhood'. Although the 'web' metaphor symbolises the overlapping and entangled collaboration of Glasstown, it is intriguing that Charlotte would emulate the ensnaring and predatory image of a 'web'. In her

[127] Later in her career, for instance, Charlotte chastised William Makepeace Thackeray for abandoning his talent for other hedonisms, and she continued to celebrate Ruskin for not falling prey to distraction: 'Different indeed is Mr. Ruskin. Thackeray has no love for his Art or his Work: he neglects it; he mocks at it; he trifles with it. Ruskin – for *his* Art and *his* Work – has a deep serious passion.' Charlotte Brontë letter to George Smith, dated 12th May 1851 in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1848-1851*, p.615.

[128] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.102.

[129] Ibid., p.23.

father's poem 'The Spider and the Fly'[130], for instance, Patrick uses the web as a metaphor for sin, a near transparent entity which Christians – the free-flying flies – cannot always see entrapping them before it is too late: 'Ah, silly fly! will you advance? […] blindly led by fatal chance, | To meet your doom' (ll.25, ll.29-30). 'The Spider and the Fly' compares those insects to 'thoughtless youths (who) will trifling play | With dangers on their giddy way […] Through passions fell' (ll.44-45, l.47). Although Charlotte did not consider the necessities of earthly work as a 'sin', we can see in 'We Wove a Web…' Charlotte's fear that her 'passions' will be to the disadvantage of duty, and vice versa. She and her siblings had become so entangled in their own web of Glasstown they would not be able to escape what she referred to as: 'the divine, silent, unseen land of thought' easily.[131] Yet her occupation forbade Charlotte from returning to this kingdom as often as she wished, thus as the structure of 'We Wove a Web…' progresses, the stanza lengths increasingly vary and the form grows increasingly inconsistent, exchanging the already changeable ABCB rhyme scheme for a simpler AABBCC structure: 'In one proud household, where the sound | Of life & stir rang highest round' (ll.95-96), only to revert back to the original rhythm. As the poem progresses, the more the rhymes reduce to forced half-rhymes, with one errant stanza not attempting to alternate the rhyme at all:

> When I sat 'neath a strange roof-tree
>
> With nought I knew or loved around me,
>
> Oh how my heart shrank back to thee-
>
> Then I felt how fast thy ties had bound me (ll.49-53).

The erratic nature of this poem echoes Charlotte's struggles to maintain the level of inspiration she experienced at home when she had so little time to create. It was her rigid schedule which prevented Charlotte from combatting Branwell against his decision to kill the

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[130] Patrick Brontë, 'The Spider and the Fly' in *Brontëana: The Rev. Patrick Brontë, A.B., His Collected Works and Life,* Ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Bingley: T. Harrison & Sons, 1898) (57-58) All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[131] Roe Head Journal (Entry 4), p.165.

Duchess. However, unable to "outgrow" the juvenilia entirely, Charlotte resorts to a new medium as an outlet for her imagination. Constrained intervals for writing and editing meant an untailored format was ideal; as a result Charlotte adopted the diary format. She attempted to continue her Angrian fiction in what she christened her 'Roe Head Journal (1836-37)' where she vented her authorial anxieties, including Branwell's "murder" of Mary Percy. The catharsis this journal offered was two-fold, an unpressured, sporadic revisit to the world of Angria, and a conduit for Charlotte's private complaints against her new profession. The act of diary-writing, Marsden writes, 'constitutes an implicit act of resistance against the effacement of female legitimacy'[132], and while Branwell was seeking to eradicate "feminine" romanticism, Charlotte's record maintained her authorial voice.

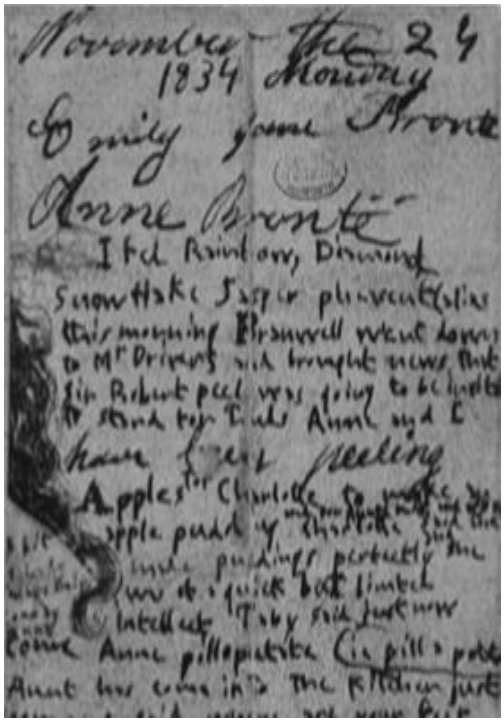

Figure 6. Facsimile of Emily and Anne Brontës' joint Diary Paper (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 24th November 1834)
Figure 7. Facsimile of Emily and Anne Brontës' joint Diary Paper (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 26th June 1837)

[132] Marsden, 'Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', p.35.

It was a technique Charlotte may have learned from her younger sisters, who declared their sisterly and authorial solidarity throughout their lives in the form of diary papers. The first was completed 24th November 1834 – the year prior to Emily's "exile" to Roe Head School – and it sparked a new forum for collaboration which brought the twin-like sisters even closer. Marsden observes that there is 'no readily apparent reason for the choice of this date: the writing of a diary, as opposed to the recording of a specific occasion seems to have been her primary motivation.'[133] Subverting the traditional diary method of recording the daily events of one's life, Emily and Anne wrote sporadically throughout the years until their deaths, contemplating how both Gondal and their dynamic has changed. Emily and Anne continually inverted the traditonal, private diary format and creating an opportunity for co-authorship. Augustin Trapenard observes the shared authority of these papers results in 'rhetorically making sure that no one will ever know who actually spoke what. The single ethôs that is produced in their joint papers is indeed a blurred image of two original speakers.'[134] These diaries celebrated collaboration and the creative freedom of the Parsonage, and even exhibit Emily and Anne's rejection of traditional feminine roles in favour of creativity. Although the diary paper begins innocently enough with Emily and Anne contributing to the kitchen – 'Anne and I have been peeling apples for Charlotte to make an apple pudding and for Aunt's nuts and apples'[135] – towards the end of the paper, Emily and Anne have abandoned these duties and relay their "rebellion" with the tone of naughty schoolchildren: 'It is past twelve o'clock Anne and I have not tidied ourselves, done our bed work or done our lessons and we want to go out to play'. It seems they have abandoned Charlotte and Tabby to clean up after the 'very untidy state' of the kitchen as they neglect the "feminine" occupations of cleaning, cooking and even their 'music exercise which consists of b major' because they would rather

[133] Simon Marsden, ''Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts,* Vol.28, No.1 (2006) (35-47), p.37.
[134] Augustin Trapenard, 'Auctorial (Im)Postures in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', , *Brontë Studies,* 34:2 (2009) (93-106), p.95.
[135] Facsimile of Emily and Anne Brontës' joint Diary Paper (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 24th November 1834). All subsequent references refer to this facsimile.

'play'. This diary paper not only demonstrates the relative freedom they enjoyed in the Parsonage – especially when compared to the rigidity of the schoolroom – but also the united front Emily and Anne maintained throughout their juvenilia. The youngest Brontës tease Charlotte's belief that 'she made pudding's perfectly' – the mimicry of Charlotte demonstrates how Emily and Anne had joined together against their elder siblings' haughtiness, solidified by their joint observations of domestic life. Throughout the papers, Emily and Anne separate themselves from the rest of the family and instead absorb themselves in their writings, for instance in their 26th June 1837 paper, Emily describes how 'Anne and I writing in the drawing room […] Aunt working in the little Room papa gone out. Tabby in the Kitchin – the Emperors and Empreses of Gondal and Gaaldine preparing to depart from Gaaldine to Gondal'[136]; emphasising how they are collaborating with each other and their Gondal characters. Throughout the diary papers, the events of the juvenile kingdom and those of the Parsonage seem to interact with each other as the sisters fuse real life with fiction: 'Papa opened the parlour door and gave Branwell a letter saying, 'here Branwell read this and show it to your Aunt and Charlotte'. The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine, Sally Mosley is washing in the back kitchen.'[137] Emily and Anne would not allow the vicissitudes of real-life to disrupt their collaboration, especially in these joint diary papers; whereas Charlotte, once "exiled" to Roe Head, yearned for the support of her co-author Branwell and the time she could once spend on her fiction as the demands of student and teacher disrupted her imaginings. Possibly having seen Emily and Anne's 1834 paper – she was present in the kitchen – and how this entry maintained their co-authorship, Charlotte may have been drawn to the journal form in the hopes that she would achieve the same continuation of supportive juvenilia.

[136] Facsimile of Emily and Anne Brontës' joint Diary Paper (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 26th June 1837).
[137] Facsimile of Emily and Anne Brontës' joint Diary Paper (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 24th November 1834).

Where Emily and Anne could seamlessly blend their supportive home life with collaborative fiction, almost every entry in Charlotte's journal commences with the stipulation that Charlotte is pressed for time. Much like Emily's 'A little while, a little while', Charlotte's repetition of this fact seems a caveat that her work will not be up to its usual high standard: 'It is seven o'clock at night […] the school room is quiet […] I now assume my own thoughts'[138]; 'Now as I have a little bit of time, there being no French lessons this afternoon, I should like to write something'.[139] Unlike Emily and Anne's own Gondalian diary, which Mardsen describes as 'juxtapos[ing] news from her domestic and imaginative worlds without explanation or interruption'[140]; Charlotte's meditations jar between fiction and reality, a disconnect Charlotte emphasises in order to lament the constant disruptions of real-life:

> The spirit of Verdopolis […] If I had had time to indulge it […] the vague sensations of that moment would have settled down into some narrative […] But just then a dolt came up with a lesson. I thought I should have vomited.[141]

Intriguingly, in her novels this discord is inverted as other-worldly elements are contained in dreams, feverish visions and even art to prevent them from disrupting her realist frameworks. Jane Eyre, for instance, argues subjects had 'indeed risen vividly in my mind'[142] when painting, and her dreams are often 'coloured, agitated, full of the ideal […] dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance.'[143] In a rare instance of unprovoked daydreaming, Mr. Rochester recalls watching her pace about the room, absorbed in her thoughts: 'I think those day visions were not dark: there was a pleasurable illumination in your eye occasionally, a soft excitement in your aspect'. The voice of Mrs. Fairfax calling a servant jolts Jane back into reality, and Rochester describes the 'much sense' in her smile which seemed 'to make light of your own abstraction.

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[138] Roe Head Journal (Entry 1), p.158.
[139] Roe Head Journal (Entry 2), p.160.
[140] Marsden, 'Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing', p.37.
[141] Roe Head Journal (Entry 3), p. 163.
[142] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre,* p.120.
[143] Ibid., p.313.

It seemed to say – "My fine visions are all very well, but I must not forget they are absolutely unreal."'[144] Nevertheless, Jane then proceeds to 'demand' Mrs. Fairfax to give her an occupation to prevent her from succumbing to daydreams once more – in complete contrast to her author's resentment of real-life duties at Roe Head. The disparity between life and literary works displayed in her teenage diary is a dramatic change of tone from Charlotte's *The History of the Year* (1829), also written in a journal style, which notes her sister Maria Brontë's marginalia in a geography book, then immediately considers the birth of Brontë juvenilia with Branwell's toy soldiers.[145] Reality and fiction no longer merge, but secede as Charlotte's process is disordered. However, the Roe Head Journal's stream-of-consciousness style allowed Charlotte to immerse herself in Angrian visions, with one entry describing her imaginings of 'Zamorna's lady' as an 'apparition'.[146] While sporadic poems and extracts of Angrian tableaus are scattered throughout the journal, the lack of edited writings meant Charlotte came to view her artistic concepts as beatific visions. Following the abrupt end of 'We Wove a Web…', Charlotte imagines that whilst she sits in a Roe Head schoolroom she 'saw the Duke of Zamorna leaning against that obelisk'.[147] Furthermore, induced by the memory of home which 'We Wove a Web…' personifies, Charlotte reimagines the gales of Haworth as 'a voice of wild and wailing music now came thrillingly to my mind's – almost to my body's – ear'[148], a forerunner to when Jane Eyre hears the 'known, loved, well-remembered voice'[149] of Rochester calling her across the moors to return home. The purgative diary allows Charlotte to 'utterly forg[et] where I was and all the gloom and cheerlessness of my situation'.[150] In not allowing the teaching profession to take her imagined kingdom from her, Charlotte was also maintaining a part of herself, writing fiction

[144] Ibid.
[145] Charlotte Brontë, *The History of the Year,* 12th March 1829, in *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, (11-12), p.12.
[146] Roe Head Journal (Entry 1), p.158, p.160.
[147] Charlotte Brontë, 'We Wove a Web in Childhood' [Prose Section], p.156.
[148] Ibid., p.156.
[149] *Jane Eyre,* p.317.
[150] 'We Wove a Web in Childhood' [Prose Section], p.156.

for her own sake. The authority of the journal allows her to mourn and eventually recover Mary Percy: 'A curtain seemed to rise and discover to me the Duchess, as she might appear when newly risen.'[151] Although Charlotte describes Mary as having 'risen' from bed in the morning, clearly she is invoking Angrian's resurrecting powers and allowing Mary to 'rise' from her grave. Accordingly, the 'veil' she lifts is both Mary's shroud and the veil between multiple worlds: the revelatory veil between heaven and earth and the veil between reality and Fancy, according to Kevin Mills, 'which blind us to what lies beyond our habitual, everyday'.[152] It was this veil that the Brontë sisters were determined to eradicate as the demands of reality threatened their literary efforts.

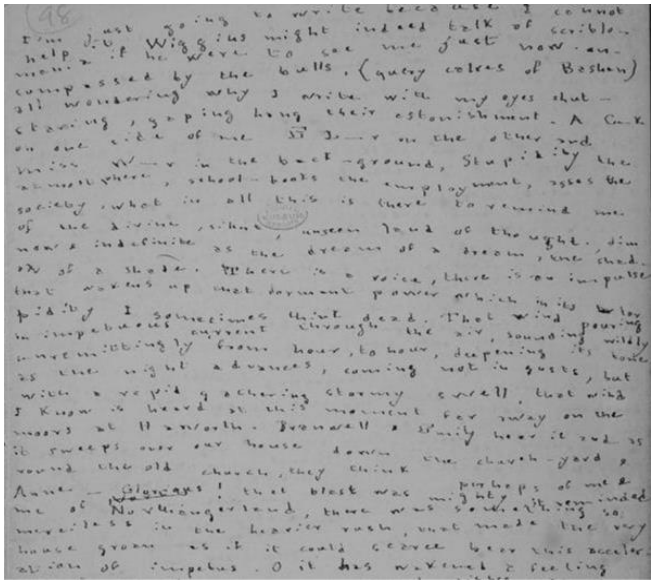

Figure 8. Extract from Charlotte Bronte's 'Roe Head Journal' (Bronte Parsonage Museum, circa. 1836-37)

While the duties of the adult world did not directly disrupt the time Christina Rossetti could devote to her literature, she remained divided between what she felt she should be and what she wished to become. Christina was charitable and far more zealous in her beliefs than even the most "angelic" Christian woman. Nevertheless, when compared with the unwavering devotion of Maria, Christina feared she was "inadequate". This is personified in

[151] Roe Head Journal (Entry 6), p.174.
[152] Kevin Mills, *Approaching Apocalypse: Unveiling Revelation in Victorian Writing* (Lewisburg: Buckell University Pres, 2007), p.98.

Maude when novice nun, and family friend to the Cliftons, Magdalen enters the narrative. Her fate is foreshadowed upon her first appearance, as she is described as 'habited as usual in quiet colours' (269), much like Maria in her pre-emptively nun-like regalia. [Fig.9.] The choice of descriptor 'habited' is reminiscent of one of William Michael's early poems, published in *The Germ*. His poem 'Her First Season' depicts a woman who, although in her prime, chooses to remain chaste and unobtrusive of society. William similarly infers a call to Sisterhood in the subject's sartorial choices: 'her hood | was not the newest fashion'.[153] Her very name foreshadows her higher calling, encouraging comparison between this character and Mary Magdalene. Unsurprisingly, this Biblical woman was a source of fascination for Christina throughout her life: a virtuous woman connected to the scriptural "Brotherhood" of Christ's disciples. Christina was enthralled by this passionate and loyal character who 'ministered to the Lord of her substance, she stood by the Cross, she sat over against the Sepulchre, she sought Christ in the empty grave.'[154] As a result, it was Mary Magdalene to whom Christ chose to reveal his resurrection first, before any of his male disciples. This concept of being "chosen" is perhaps why Christina chose this name for the character who felt divinely selected to become a nun. As Christina's *Time Flies* (1895) recounts, Mary Magdalene was not without sin as it was that same figure 'out of whom aforetime [sic.] He had cast seven devils.'[155] The story of Mary Magdalene is one of forgiveness and redemption, which is well suited to the confessional tone of Maude's poetry. However it is not only Maude who completes a verse. Magdalen is encouraged to participate in Maude's exercise in *bouts rimés* which Maude explains as follows: 'it is very easy. Someone gives rhymes […] then all of us fill them up as we think fit. A sonnet is the best form to select.' (269) Maude appears to initiate the *bouts-rimés* game so she can exhibit her prowess and demonstrate the merits of her poetry. It was a method which Christina practised in the

[153] William Michael Rossetti, 'Her First Season' in *The Germ: Literary Magazine of the Pre-Raphaelites*, Ed. Andrea Rose, p.8.
[154] Christina Rossetti, 'July 22. Feast of St. Mary Magdalene.' in *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895), (139-140), p.139.
[155] Ibid.

summer of 1848 when holidaying with her brother William Michael. The Rossetti brothers began the game in 1847[156] to help perfect their work – as Andrea Rose explains, William Michael acknowledged 'that most of his own contributions in verse to *The Germ* were but *bouts-rimés* performances'[157] – and Christina inserted herself within the collaboration. Desiring for her voice to be heard amongst her brothers, William Michael recalls his youngest sister had a greater tendency for 'whim and sprightliness in writing than either of her brothers […] some of her *bouts-rimés* sonnets must be the best of the best of the batch, for a writer who is whimsical need not be close-knit.'[158] Maude is equally empowered by her poetry, and imagines her talent triumphing above the female duties she rejects in her *bouts-rimés* sonnet. The poem considers warring standards for women, embodied in traditional, hyper-feminine elder ladies and innovative women such as Maude:

> If all the world were water fit to drown
>
> There are some whom you would not teach to swim
>
> Rather enjoying if you saw them sink;
>
> Certain old ladies dressed in girlish pink (271, ll.9-12)

The ominous vision of the antiquated women who are not taught to 'swim' as the flood washes over them emulates Maude's belief that her talent and ingenuity will allow her to swim, or rather survive, in the world. She invites her female kin and friends to join her in this declaration of individuality as she makes poetry a collaborative effort. Since she will not, or cannot, join their cultural accepted notions of femininity, Maude instead lays the foundations for a new Sisterhood. Utilising the *bouts-rimés* diversion to forge connections in the midst of emotional isolation was a practice Christina became accustomed to during the dissolution of her engagement to Collinson (1849-50). She particularly pined for the collaborative efforts of the game whenever the betrothal caused her to be separated from her siblings into the

[156] The brothers' engagement with the *bouts-rimés* game will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[157] Andrea Rose, Ed. *The Germ: Literary Magazine of the Pre-Raphaelites*, p.vii.
[158] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1., p.80.

unfamiliar territory of the Collinsons', for instance when visiting the James Collinson's mother and sister she wrote a longing letter to William Michael for the distraction of the sonnets: 'Ah Will! If you were here we would write *bouts-rimés* sonnets, and be subdued together'.[159] Christina wrote this letter while she was producing what would become *Maude;* subsequently her protagonist embodies her longing for the recovery of collaboration and familial support. The structure of the game particularly appealed as these sonnets contained the voices of two siblings, for instance one letter written by Christina in 1849 expresses her gratitude to be in possession of William Michael's 'rhymes', although the confusion of her private life meant she was too uninspired to complete his challenge: 'I have not yet filled up your rhymes, but still hope to do so; only I will not delay writing till the inspiration comes.'[160] Conceivably it was not only the uncertainty of her engaged status that hindered Christina's motivation, but also the fear that she would never escape the domestic sphere. She was already engaged as her father's nursemaid and amanuensis[161] and it seemed that in the company of Collinson's mother and sister, Christina foresaw that wifehood would be even less inspiring. Writing to William Michael congratulating his work, Christina notes that she has been preoccupied from her own verse by distinctly "feminine" and far less stimulating pastimes: 'Your *bouts-rimés* is one of the best you have written: my own have fared much better than its intrinsic value merits. My overwhelming business consists of nothing more important than needle-work and such like.'[162] Creativity was no longer a standard of the family environment, as her future family did not engage in such activities. Consequently, writing became a form of rebellion against cultural norms, as Maude's sonnet clearly demonstrates, and against the comparable rigidity of her in-laws. Incidentally, when Maude

[159] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 25th August 1849 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti: With Some Supplementary Letters and Appendices,* Ed. William Michael Rossetti (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p.33.
[160] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 19th September 1849 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti,* p.36.
[161] As explained in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[162] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 26th September 1849 in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti,* p.37.

completes this sonnet, it is her inherently feminine cousin Mary who does not understand its meaning, calling it a 'very odd sonnet' in need of explanations to make it 'comprehensible' (270). We must ask if this character intentionally shares the same name as James Collinson's sister, whose relationship with Christina was under strain during the production of *Maude*:

> My correspondence with Mary Collinson has come to an end by her desire. Do not imagine we have been quarrelling […] she seems to think her brother's affairs so unpromising as to render our continuing to write to each other as not pleasant.[163]

Christina's struggle to assimilate with this ideal, extended family life is echoed in the dichotomy of her feminised personality compared to that of the titular character. Christina was attempting to comprehend what was expected of her as a married woman, and particularly as a Collinson – or rather, as "no longer a Rossetti" – and so she contemplates the role of the married Victorian lady in Mary as an embodiment of ideal "wifehood."

Cousin Mary enters the narrative already absorbed in girlishness, 'arranging her Mother's special nosegay.' (267) The romanticised image of flower-arranging contrasts the first scene of the narrative, in which it is Maude's mother who must tend the decorations of the sitting-room: '[Mrs Foster] entered the sitting room with a bunch of roses in her hand' (266). Meanwhile, Maude is surrounded by a 'chaos of stationery', ignoring her mother 'only too much accustomed to inattention' as she talks of visiting the cousins. As a result, Mary is depicted as more feminine and more daughterly, immediately interacting with her mother who enters and relieves her of her chore: '"Here my dear, I will finish doing the flowers" […] "Thank you Mamma, the flowers are nearly done."' (267) Mrs. Foster enters the living room while Maude is bent over her writing desk, innocently enquiring: 'Penny for your thoughts?' (265)[164] Maude only responds once she has 'locked her writing book' and only 'resumes' her

[163] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 19th September 1849 (10-11) in *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti,* p.10.

[164] Intriguingly, Christina emulates the penny motif in her magnum opus 'Goblin Market (1860)' (Christina Rossetti, 'Goblin Market (1860)' in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (Cambridge: Macmillan

writing 'when once more alone.' (265) Instantly, we see Maude as a private poet, unable to converse with reality once the distraction of verse is put away. It is purely typical 'feminine' customs which Maude bears no interest in, completely juxtaposing Mary who continues to arrange flowers until her mother sends her to the Railway station to meet Maude and her mother, who have come to visit their country cousins for Mary's birthday. While Maude is contemplating poetry and her attempts to assimilate in the feminine dynamic, the worst crime Mary commits is to 'delay their start' to the station so that 'neither had found time to lay hands on a parasol' (267). Her frivolous priorities appear to serve her well as Mary fulfils the "ultimate" female vocation, marriage. Mary secures a 'Mr Herbert' who, according to Agnes in a letter to Maude, 'calls at least once a day, but sometimes oftener; so all day long Mary is on the alert' (285). As a result, her narrative comes full circle, except instead of tending to a mere vase of roses, she maintains an entire garden, as Agnes writes: '[Mary] takes much more interest in the roses over the porch than was formally the case' (285), seeking to build an Eden for her new husband. Roses are emblematic of nubile youth and beauty throughout Christina's verse – the red of the flower, Thomas argues, signifying 'urgent sexual connotation(s).'[165] Marsh observes that Christina's poems during the period when her engagement to Collinson was collapsing, portray a disconnect with this flower and

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and Co., 1862)). For Maude, her mother is asking to know her most private thoughts, and she refuses to share – in spite of the metaphorical price. Equally, pennies are used in in 'Goblin Market' to symbolise female autonomy and ownership. The two protagonist sisters, Lizzie and Laura, are drawn to the tempting fruits on display in the goblins' market: 'Come buy, come buy' (l.4). While Laura purchases fruit with a lock of her hair: '"Buy from us with a golden curl." | She clipp'd a precious golden lock' (ll.125-126), Lizzie '[t]oss'd them her penny.' (l.367) Laura is offering a piece of her body, but Lizzie offers 'a penny for her thoughts' – in other words, a piece of her mind – the goblins are displeased and reject her: 'Worn out by her resistance, | Flung back her penny, kick'd their fruit.' (ll.438-439). For further reading, please refer to: Jill Rapport, 'The Price of Redemption in 'Goblin Market'', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900.* (2010) Vol.50. No.4. pp.853-875.
(As Serena Trowbridge argues, 'Goblin Market' is the most widely studied of all Christina's works: '[t]he act of interpreting 'Goblin Market' critically is growing in complexity as trends in criticism are brought to bear on it' (Serena Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.116.) This thesis will therefore focus on the less widely-discussed *Maude*.)

[165] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Virago, 1995), p.242.

all it symbolises. Verses such as her 1849 'Song' instead contains a 'blend of melancholy and insouciance'[166]:

> Oh! roses for the flush of youth
>
> And laurel for the perfect prime;
>
> But pluck an ivy branch for me
>
> Grown old before my time[167]

Christina describes her own bloom as 'withering' during this tumultuous period, and the "feminine ideal" of Mary represents her emotional struggle against patriarchal expectations. She takes the matrimonial path almost taken by Christina in order to secure a position within the Pre-Raphaelite circle.[168] It is Mary's choice to marry which causes Maude to return to the country, where she subsequently experiences the carriage accident which causes her death. Feminine ideals directly reject Maude, much as Christina was "rejected" from both the governess profession and her marriage to Collinson. Thomas argues this death is not only symbolic of Maude's "exile" from reality, but simply proof that Christina could conceive no other alternative 'to resolve the dilemma of self which she has outlined, and does not resolve it. Instead Maude has a carriage accident, and dies'.[169] The discernible urgency to finish Maude's story not only embodies Christina's lack of resolution for her character, but that *Maude* has fulfilled its purpose for Christina. Into the novella's pages, Christina vented her conflicted feelings towards the division of her family, the loss of her extended family in the Collinsons, and her contending professional callings. Once the situation calmed, Maude met her swift end, as Christina tells William Michael: 'I think *Maude* may await my return. She is lying perdu in a drawer […] Perhaps I shall some day [sic.] produce something better.'[170]

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[166] Jan Marsh, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Their Lives in Letters and Diaries* (London: Collins & Brown, 1996), p.19.
[167] Christina Rossetti, 'Song' in *Poetical Works*, p.292, ll.1-4.
[168] As will be discussed further in Chapter Four.
[169] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.71.
[170] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 28th July 1851, *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti* (40-41), p.40.

There was an alternative form of womanhood still open to both Maude and Christina however, under the protection of a devout Sisterhood.

Figure 9. William Michael Rossetti, 'Maria Rossetti',(Troxell Collection, Princeton University Library, c.1869)
Figure 10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Ecce Ancilla Domini!', [Close-Up, Christina Rossetti as model for the Virgin Mary] (Tate, circa.1849-1850)

This piety was encapsulated for Christina in her sister Maria, and for Maude in her family-friend Magdalen Ellis. Engaging in the *bouts-rimés* game, Magdalen writes a sonnet of sheer purity, describing the 'wrapping lilies in their leafy gown' (270, l.13). The lily was a well-known symbol of the Holy Virgin, as we witness in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting 'Ecce Ancilla Domini' [Fig.10.], for which Christina Rossetti posed as the Virgin Mary in the same period that she was contemplating writing *Maude*. This image of purity is one Magdalen seeks to bestow upon others as her sonnet depicts that she 'fancies' 'teaching water-lily heads to swim' (l.10), reminiscent of Maria's role as a teacher to young, pure women. Once again, art imitates life as Magdalen begins her sonnet in entirely monochrome images: 'I fancy the good fairies dressed in white, | Glancing like moon-beams through the shadows

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Note how Christina refers to the manuscript *Maude,* only to then personify its eponymous character – Maude is a tangible person for her author, demonstrating how much of her own life Christina had breathed into her protagonist.

black' (ll.1-2), replicating the traditional black-and-white garb of a nun. In her postulant status, her brief stint in writing, playing at the Rossetti pastime of *bouts-rimés,* and her talent for teaching, Magdalen bears uncanny resemblances to Maria, depicting herself in black-and-white in a foretelling of the unequivocal legacy Maria forged for herself.

Where Magdalen echoes Maria's temperament, fifteen-year-old Maude continues to emulate her author. When Christina was Maude's age, she wrote to William Michael an account of her days, demonstrating how unoccupied her time was when compared to her siblings: 'all sorts of accomplishments have showered down upon your talented sister. I have commenced initiation into the mysteries of backgammon.'[171] Frances Thomas notes how this humorous missive demonstrates how Christina had discovered how 'invalidity gave a remarkable degree of mental and, oddly, physical freedom, releasing the young woman from the mind-numbing round of social calls and needlework.'[172] This rejection of "feminine" pastimes is parodied in *Maude,* whose social reluctance makes her late for breakfast (272) and tend to the hearth 'instead of running out to meet her guests' (274). While Maude's mother enters the narrative 'with a bunch of roses in her hand' (265) to decorate the sitting room – much as Mary Clifton does in the next scene to emphasise her femininity – Maude is surrounded by a 'chaos of stationery', ignoring her mother who is 'only too much accustomed to inattention.' (265) Maude is depicted as a poor hostess and guest and a frequently inattentive daughter, while Christina certainly could not be accused of the latter, both character and author come to realise how unmindful they had been of their "feminine" and familial duties. The backgammon board represents this division. Upon seeing this monochromic image, Maude is overcome with a headache and retires to her room for the evening (280). It is well-known that the family loved board games and that Frances would

[171] Christina Rossetti letter to William Michael Rossetti, dated 17th September 1845, (Troxell Collection, Princeton University Library), CO189, as cited in Frances Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1995), p.53.
[172] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti: A Biography,* p.52.

use childhood pastimes to diffuse any lingering rivalry. Rather than allow sibling competition to become unmanageable, Frances believed it could be settled temporarily by a quick game.[173] The fact that Maude recuses herself from partaking in simple games, which she has never done prior to this point in the narrative, symbolises her nineteen-year-old author's determination not to ignore her feelings, or to increase to the intensity of Maude's crisis, knowing a "quick game" will not help her. In fact, while Christina was writing to William Michael about her practising backgammon, he was away visiting Maria, who was busy working as a governess to Miss Elizabeth Read. The concurrence of games, supposedly futile "accomplishments" and an awareness of "superior" womanhood is echoed in Maude's reaction to the game.

This brings us to the second "defect" which William Michael determines: the scene in which Maude forgoes the receiving of the Eucharist at the Christmas service.[174] She states: 'I will not profane Holy Things; I will not add this to all the rest' (281) – the "rest" meaning her other supposed sins. The Eucharist is a fundamental practise in Catholicism and High Anglicanism, therefore the foregoing of this feels yet another extreme punishment. Suzanne Waldman views Maude's actions as a form of self-detrimental rebellion against feminine ideals: '[a]n examination of Rossetti's various images of Maude writing death-driven poems and falling away from the church shows that in doing so, Maude is not in the least obeying the cultural norms of her society.'[175] However, the Eucharist is also the ultimate symbol of sacrifice, and while both Magdalen and Maria easily sacrifice the pleasure of writing, and – in Maria's case – even provisionally sacrificing her dreams of being a nun to help the family, Christina and Maude struggle to even contemplate doing so. Thus Maude is not sacrificing

[173] Roe, p.138.
For further reading of Frances's methodology of preventing sibling disharmony with card and board games, please refer to Chapters One and Four of this thesis.
[174] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. 'Prefatory Note to *Maude*', 1897, p.ix.
[175] Suzanne Waldman, *The Demon & The Damozel: Dynamics of Desire in the Works of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), p.44.

'feminine' poems and the church in a misled act of proto-feminism, rather the guilt induced from this realisation causes Maude to doubt when she will ever become 'fit again to approach the Holy Altar' (282). For Maude, as well as her author, it seems even the most trivial divergence from religious "norms" was as sacrilegious as renouncing God altogether, until Maude believes she can only atone through her death. After a carriage accident, Maude is left bedridden, relying on her poetry for escape and to confess her sins. Maude finds remarkable peace in no longer having to contemplate the 'bloom' of her femininity in her penultimate sonnet: 'Fade, tender lily […] Fade every flower' (297, ll.1-3). Maude embodies the religious and creative contentions in Christina's "self" and in her household. Showalter describes how 'by 1848, Christina had already experienced the first profound divergence between her life and those of her brothers'.[176] In 1846, Frances, Maria and Christina left William Michael behind whilst they attended church; the sixteen-year-old William Michael, already the breadwinner of the family, felt grown enough to declare his agnosticism, and his preference for 'honest and open disbelief to hypocritical conformity'.[177] Although her devotion did not come as a surprise for those who knew of Maria's 'uncommonly enthusiastic temper, which eventually settled down into religious devotion',[178] her brothers and sister struggled to comprehend how Maria could deviate from their once shared artistic endeavours. There is something telling here about how William describes Maria as "settling" into church life, or perhaps "for" church life. Although this could simply be William's way of comparing the often frantic artistic lives of both he and his brother and sister to the contentment which Maria found for herself, it would have been difficult for William and Dante Gabriel in particular to comprehend her decision. The predominant agnosticism of the Rossetti brothers was a factor which provoked much anxiety in their staunchly faithful sisters, who were unceasing in their attempts to salvage their brothers'

[176] Showalter, 'Introduction', *Maude,* p. x.
[177] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1, p.128.
[178] William Michael Rossetti Ed., *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, (London: Roberts Brothers, 1895), p.81.

souls. This was especially true of Maria who would continue to attempt to convert her brothers until her death in 1876, and who confessed to William Michael that 'one principal motive of hers in entering the Sisterhood was to obtain from God the grace of conversion'[179], so she may restore their Christian status. When placing Maude's foregoing of church in a biographical context, it seems Maude is also yearning for someone to reinstate her previous unwavering Christianity, instigated by the spiritually superior Magdalen. As ever, comparing herself to the other female characters only contributes to Maude's downfall.

Both Christina and Charlotte struggled to consolidate the familial duties which encumbered them and the subsequent loss of the familial collaboration. In childhood the family had always been a source of support and inspiration, but as young women they had to rely on their individual initiatives to continue their work. The need to process these changing dynamics resulted in cathartic narratives such as the journal and the largely autobiographical novella. Such therapeutic styles would be utilised by all the Brontë and Rossetti Sisters as cultural, feminine pressures continued throughout their careers

The World Within: Sisterly Solidarity in Life-Writings and Fiction

Before she capitulated entirely to her "female" responsibilities, Charlotte permitted herself one last attempt to make herself known as a poet. Subsequently, on 29th December 1836 Romantic poet Robert Southey received a missive from a twenty-year-old Charlotte Brontë, seeking his guidance into the publishing world.[180] Charlotte had returned to Haworth for the Christmas Holidays, and ambitiously sought the attention of the then-Poet Laureate, enclosing some of her favoured juvenile pieces within her letter. Charlotte's actions were not

[179] William Michael Rossetti as cited in 'A Shadow of Dante: Rossetti in the Final Years (Extracts from W. M. Rossetti's Unpublished Diaries, 1876-1882)', Ed. William E. Fredeman, *Victorian Poetry*, 20 (1982), (217-245), p.218.

[180] Charlotte knew the restrictions of her education and her isolated home life meant she may not be considered "worldly" enough for competitive publishing circles. As a result, she and Branwell searched for mentors. Branwell selected William Wordsworth, (as will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis) and Charlotte chose Southey.

that of impudence, but optimism as, to the Brontës, Southey was not only a talented poet in his own right, but a champion of juvenile liteature. The siblings witnessed Southey's celebration of this sub-genre in his role as editor of a treasured Brontë relic: *The Remains of Henry Kirke White*[181]. Many of the poems included in this anthology are subtitled with the age that Kirke White completed them, such as: 'On Being confined to School One Pleasant Morning in Spring (Written at the Age of Thirteen) and 'Song (Written at the Age of Fourteen)'. Consequently, Laurie Langbauer observes, 'Kirke White became symbolic of a movement of juvenile writers', and Southey had 'consolidated juvenile writing into a recognisable tradition.'[182] Southey's acknowledgement of the talent of juvenilia writers compelled Charlotte's decision to write to Southey who, Alexander argues, must have appeared the ultimate advocate that 'youth and humble circumstances [were] no barrier to success as an author'.[183] In an attempt to garner favour, Charlotte demonstrates wider knowledge of Southey's work. Although Charlotte's original missive no longer exists, Southey's answer parodies the more hyperbolic phrases, granting insight into the fanatical tone it contained. Harman declares the letter to have gone 'beyond bounds' with an extreme account 'not essential to her purpose, of […] the intensity of her ambition'[184], with Southey himself noting Charlotte's confession of an 'ardent desire "to be for ever known" as a poetess'.[185] There is, however, one statement which would particularly invoke discomfiture in Charlotte to recollect; her portrayal of Southey 'stooping from a throne of light and glory'.

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[181] As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.

[182] Laurie Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition: Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750-1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.110-111.

Charlotte Brontë was not the only young female writer to believe that Southey would also overlook gender as a boundary, as Romantic poet Caroline Bowles wrote to Southey in 1818 for criticism of her own juvenilia. W.A. Speck explains Bowles felt encouraged 'by his efforts on behalf of Henry Kirke White' (W. A. Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p.175.) - much as Charlotte Brontë would come to seventeen-years-later, hoping Southey would champion her juvenilia as he had once supported Kirke White's 'unpremeditated effusions'. (Kirke White, 'Preface to 'Clifton Grove'', Vol.2, p.5.)

[183] Christine Alexander, 'Early Ambitions: Charlotte Brontë, Henry Kirke White and Robert Southey', *Brontë Studies,* 43:1 (2018) (14-31), p.22.

[184] Harman, *Charlotte Brontë: A Life*, pp.100-101.

[185] Robert Southey letter to Charlotte Brontë, dated 12th March 1837 in *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey,* Ed. Charles Cuthbert Southey (New York: Harper Brothers' Publishers, 1851) (547-548), p.547. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

(547) When Southey's son, the Reverend Charles Cuthbert, requested to see his father's letter to Charlotte in 1850 – so he may copy the missive into his father's *Life and Correspondence* – Charlotte entreated that he omit this remark, marking it with a pencil.[186] [Fig.11.]

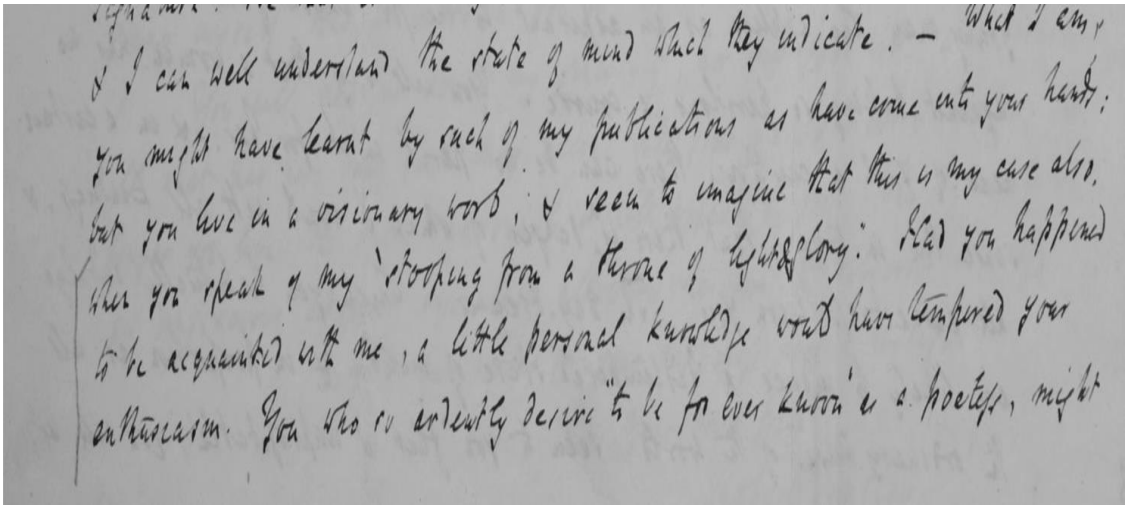

Figure 11. Robert Southey, 'Letter to Charlotte Brontë, dated 12th March 1837' (Extract, with Charlotte Brontë's omission request) (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1837)

Although Charlotte's deific description is extravagant, she is in fact echoing Kirke White. There are multitudinous instances in *Remains* of the image of an incandescent throne, often granting sovereignty to entities such as Nature and Imagination.[187] Charlotte's words are particularly reminiscent of his poem 'Genius: An Ode' in which he personifies "Genius" as the overseer of great poetry: 'Genius, from thy starry throne […] In radiant robe of light

[186] Charlotte explains 'my own letter to Mr Southey I do not remember but the passage quoted there seems to me now somewhat silly, and I would rather it was not preserved'. (Charlotte Brontë letter to Charles Southey, dated 26th August 1850 in Barker, *Life in Letters*, p.50.)
In his *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey,* Charles Cuthbert Southey does acquiesce to Charlotte's request to remove the 'stooping from a throne of light and glory line', and does not even name Charlotte as the recipient. (New York: Harper Brothers' Publishers, 1851) pp.547-548. Instead he includes a footnote which reads: 'The lady to whom this and the next letter are addressed is now well known as a prose writer of no common powers.' p.548.

[187] This includes a poem addressed to artist Henry Fuseli whom White dubs a 'Mighty magician' whose Genius makes him worthy 'when sullen tempest wrap the throne of night | Art wont to sit and catch the gleam'. (Henry Kirke White, 'Ode to H. Fuseli, Esq. R.A.' in *The Remains of HENRY KIRKE WHITE, of Nottingham*, Vol.2, Ed. Robert Southey (London: Printed by W. Wilson, 1810) (65-66), ll.2-3.)

array'd.[188] By having Southey's image 'stoop' from such a throne, Brontë is thus declaring him an equal of 'Genius' itself. As a result, she implores Southey to share his advice and poetic skill, just as Kirke White pleaded for "Genius" to: 'hear the plaint by thy sad favourite made'[189]. In sending off her work for criticism beyond the family, Charlotte most likely desired a missive similar to one Southey had sent Kirke White following a disparagement of his work by critics: 'it is scarcely possible that so young a writer should write better.'[190] Southey's response – which arrived ten weeks later, when Charlotte had long returned to Roe Head – was not the reply Charlotte had desired.[191] Although Southey did observe from the juvenilia attached that Charlotte did 'evidently possess and in no inconsiderable degree what Wordsworth calls "the faculty of Verse"' (547), her heightened imagination was a cause for concern. An alarmed Southey declares that Charlotte inhabits 'a visionary world, and seem to imagine that this is my case also', warning her that being too 'ambitious of distinction' may result in 'disappointment' (547-548). Charlotte had spent her time at Roe Head growing increasingly reliant upon her fiction, hoping it would be to her mental benefit. Southey was not only decreeing this had been to the impairment of her narrative voice, but to the detriment of her 'proper duties' as a woman. Southey believed that once Charlotte became preoccupied with societal expectations, she would grow 'less eager for celebrity' (547). Although Southey kindly cautions Charlotte of the complexities of the publishing world, Charlotte must have been greatly affected by Southey's assertion that 'literature cannot be the business of a woman's life.'[192] (547) The subsequent increased awareness of

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[188] Kirke White, 'Genius: An Ode' *The Remains of HENRY KIRKE WHITE, of Nottingham*, Vol.2, Ed. Robert Southey (London: Printed by W. Wilson, 1810) (70-74), Stanza 3, ll.1-3.

[189] Kirke White, 'Genius: An Ode', Stanza 3, l.4.

[190] Robert Southey letter to Henry Kirke White, dated 18th May 1804, in *Remains,* Vol. 2., p.177. The letter continues as follows: 'you will always remember the 'Ode [to] the Rosemary' with satisfaction & pride. In saying this much I speak the opinion of Mr Wordsworth *&* Mr Coleridge as well as my own.' Southey's letter emphasises the effect Kirke White's juvenilia had upon Romantic circles.

[191] Elizabeth Gaskell stresses that Southey's reply was so 'stringent' that it made Charlotte 'put aside, for a time, all idea of literary enterprise'. (Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.1. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), p.120.)

[192] Juliet Barker notes the profound influence Southey's reply had upon Charlotte who 'ritualised her putting away of literary ambition by writing upon the letter wrapper: "Southey's Advice To be kept for ever."' in *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.305.

gender difference and female expectation – substantiated by Southey – would effect her attachment to her juvenilia. She dissociated from all-engrossing Angria and grounded herself in realism, which would shape her later novels. Her explorations of women responding to patriarchal power which began with Mary Percy helped Charlotte create independent protagonists such as Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe. Hence Charlotte's attempts to maintain their collaborative juvenilia while at Roe Head shaped her career as an observer of 'women's inner lives [...] uninhibited in her portrayal of the female psyche'.[193]

The Brontë sisters decided to make their feminine voices assets in their fiction – not the hindrances Southey, and even Branwell[194], believed them to be. Anne, for instance, would celebrate the private, predominantly feminine, forum of the diary in her unflinchingly realist novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) where protagonist Helen Huntingdon's diary is the epicentre of the novel's concentric narrative. Although Gilbert Markham has been narrating the novel thus far, Helen offers him her journal which describes the abuse Helen suffered at the hands of her first husband, Arthur. Rather than relive her tumultuous past, Helen instead allows Markham access to her diary and initiates an epistolary shift in the novel. In doing so, she grants her past self a voice she did not have during her time with Arthur. Young Helen's objective in continuing the diary throughout her marriage is the same as that of the Brontë sisters during their time away from home – to maintain her sense of self:

> This paper will serve instead of a confidential friend into whose ear I might pour forth the overflowing of my heart. It will not sympathize with my distresses, but then it will not laugh at them, and, if I keep it close, it cannot tell again; so it is, perhaps, the best

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Alternatively, W. A. Speck defends Southey stating 'he was not discouraging Charlotte from writing poems. Indeed he urged her to "write poetry for its own sake". What he was advising was that she should not make it her profession.' (W. A. Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p.237.)

[193] Lucasta Miller, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Vintage, 2002), p.1

[194] As will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

friend I could have for the purpose.[195]

Helen personifies the diary as a confidante, suggesting she does not wish to merely write in the diary, but communicate with it, just as Anne believes that her own diary was the personification of a close – specifically *female* – friend.

Throughout her struggles as a governess for the Robinson family of Thorp Green in the early 1840s[196], both Emily and Anne attempted to continue their diary papers separately and therefore maintain the creative presence of their co-author. The effect of the distance from home is evident, however, as Anne's 30th July 1841 confesses her ignorance of what is occurring in Gondal, and seems to doubt the longevity of the kingdom: 'I wonder whether Gondaliand [sic.] will still be flourishing and what will be their condition.'[197] Anne's obliviousness can be explained not only by her separation from Emily, but the aforementioned demands of a governess's time. She emphasises her displeasure at having returned to the uninspiring schoolroom: 'I dislike the situation and wish to change it […] my pupils are gone to bed and I am hastening to finish this before I follow them.' Once again, time was of the essence but Anne was determined to keep her promise to Emily that they would maintain the diary papers, and therefore their collaboration. Correspondingly, Emily completed her own diary entry on the same day and reveals recent events within Gondal: '[t]he Gondalians are at present in a threatening state but there is no open rupture as yet'.[198] Although Emily was contently living at home, the Gondalians are suffering under her lack of

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[195] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) (Darlington: J.M. Dent, 1893), pp.320-321.

[196] Anne's post at Thorp Green will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

[197] Anne Brontë, 'Diary Entry dated 30th July 1841' in *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal*, *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings*, Ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.489-490. All subsequent references will refer to this transcript.

[198] Emily Brontë, 'Diary Entry dated 30th July 1841' in *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal,* pp.488-489. All subsequent references will refer to this transcript.

Once again, fact and fiction are blended on the diary pages as Emily reflect the sisters' tested dynamic onto that of the Gondal characters – the kingdom is 'threatened' by the separation of its Genii. Moreover, just as Anne is "banished" to the schoolroom of Thorp Green, the princes and princesses of 'the royal royaltys [sic.]' are imprisoned in 'the palace of Instruction' – also known as 'Southern College' of Gondal. The fact that Republicans have locked the nobles of Gondal in a former schoolroom can be read as an empathetic echo of what Emily believed Anne was suffering in Thorp Green.

inspiration. She describes how she has 'a good many books on hand – but I am sorry to say that as usual I make small progress with any'. Her imagination falters in Anne's absence and her diary paper ends with a battle-cry of sisterly encouragement: 'now I close sending from far an exhortation of courage! to exiled and harassed Anne wishing she was here'. While their Gondal juvenilia was faltering in their separation, the diary format allowed Emily and Anne to continue their sisterly support system beyond the geographical divide. Collaboration in any form was the foundation of their sibling connection.

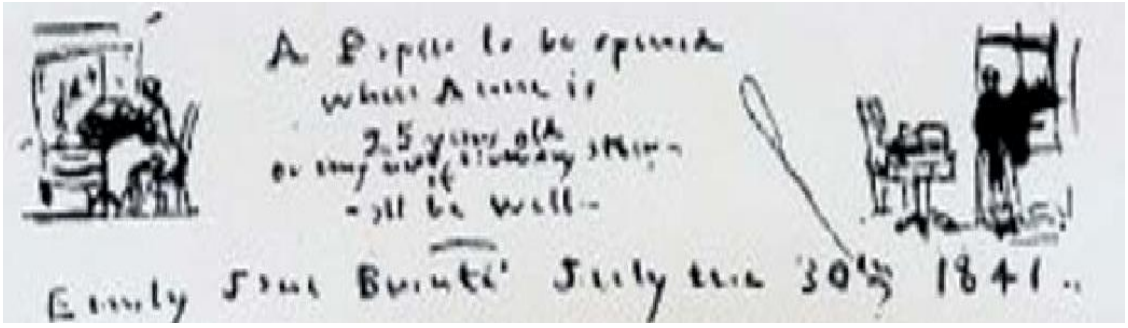

Figure 12. Reproduction of Emily Brontë's Diary Paper (Location unknown, 30 July 1841). Reproduction from Clement Shorter's, *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1896), p.146. [Edward Chitham argues the figure on the top right of this paper is a self-portrait by Emily, the left-hand figure is a depiction of 'exiled and harassed Anne'[199]]

Where the youngest Brontës allowed their cathartic writings to maintain their tested co-authorship, Christina used her semi-autobiographical novella to contemplate her sister Maria's "redefinition" as an Associate Sister. Maude's continual exploration of her sense-of-self reaches a climax once she learns of Magdalen Ellis's life-changing news from Mary and Agnes: Magdalen 'entered on her noviciate in the Sisterhood of Mercy established near our house' (275). The location of this fictional convent emulates the establishment in the mid-1840s of a Sisterhood of Mercy house close to where the Rossetti women worshipped.

[199] 'Emily sketched two tiny portraits on each side of the heading. The two figures are so small that we do not really know what they depict. But it seems that she has once again drawn herself from the back, on the top right corner of the paper […] Edward Chitham reads the thumbnail sketch as a portrait of Anne at Scarborough If his assumption were true, Emily and Anne are graphically separated from each other, the imposition of form reflecting the impossibility of shared writing.' Augustin Trapenard, 'Auctorial (Im)Postures in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers', , *Brontë Studies,* 34:2 (2009) (93-106), p.99. (Citing Edward Chitham, *The Birth of Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë at Work* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp.11-12.)

Maria's steady descent into obscurity is prophesied in the character of Magdalen as she disappears from the narrative and we only hear of her through others.[200] Now it becomes an amusement in the face of Magdalen's calling, treated as a passing fancy: 'Why Maude, you are grown quite a woman; but you look more delicate than ever, and very thin: do you still write verses?' Then, without waiting for a reply, her cousins abruptly state: 'Magdalen Ellis wished for an autograph copy' of Maude's sonnet (274). Maude consequently grows humble and simply says: 'Yes, I continue to write now and then as the humour seizes me' (275). Maude feels her vocation belittled by that of Magdalen, just as Christina felt in the wake of Maria's determination to become a nun. This is the first scene in which Maude grows embarrassed about her poetry as she prepares to send a poem to Magdalen, Maude tells her cousins that they may read it 'only please not in my presence' (276). Defensively, Maude attempts to outshine Magdalen's vocation once more as she informs her cousins that she had previously been encouraged to become a novice herself – due to her evident piety – however her mother thought her 'too unwell for regularity' but she has 'regretted it since' (275). It seems Maude is justifying her poetry once more as the only vocation her health allows, unable to teach or join a convent and it seems Christina is attempting to convince herself that this is the case. Nevertheless, both author and protagonist question whether they are considering the Sisterhood of religion for the true purpose of unifying oneself to God, or to simply avoid the pressures of womanhood beyond convent walls.

One of Maude's last poems is her longest; the three-part narrative titled 'The Three Nuns' (288-293). Each of the titular nuns contemplates their motivations for making their vows, and only one – the third nun – has been driven by piety and sacrifice: 'My heart trembled when first I took | The vows which must be kept' (III, ll.64-65).[201] The first nun is seeking

[200] Maude's cousins for instance describe her as being 'done with Albums and such like' (36) – in other words, done with writing. Before the news of Sister Magdalen, Maude's poetic ability was celebrated by her cousins.

[201] This nun's sacrifice was previously discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

relief from the anxieties of womanhood: 'Here wrapped in my spotless veil, | Curtained from intruding eyes' (I, ll.29-30). The second has entered the convent in order to "recover" from an unsuccessful love: 'I sacrificed, he never bought. | He nothing gave, he nothing took' (II, ll.10-11) – the thanklessness of this turbulent relationship a parallel of Christina's broken betrothal to James Collinson, which Christina was attempting to escape: 'I prayed not we may meet again' (II, l.21). All three women, Thomas maintains 'are aspects of Christina's quest for reconciliation and calm, her urge to escape from the claustrophobic coffin of her own nature.'[202] Both the first and second nuns represent Christina and Maude's desire to be absolved, not of their sins, but of their apprehensions. Both women believe they can "fool" the Sisterhood as to their reasons, but they cannot deceive the Almighty: 'Even if, when kneeling […] Faith, zeal and love kindled a fire (II, ll.15-16). The third Nun is the true Sister – the woman who hears 'the names rang in mine ears | Of daughter, sister, wife' (III, ll.71-72) and still crosses the convent threshold. She relinquishes 'ideal' femininity for spiritual contentment, willing to end her public self – just a William Michael stated Maria was: 'I know, my dear Maggie, that your longing is to die to the world, and live to Christ: to suffer, work, love, and be saved by love.'[203] Although Maria would continue to publish her exegesis-style works in the convent, she relinquished the beloved fiction and poetry she created in her childhood. Unfortunately, she even abandoned her study of Dante upon entering the Sisterhood. Although her 1871 work *A Shadow of Dante* was popular[204], she could no longer study her father's hero. An 1874 letter to her former student, Oliver "Nolly" Madox Brown, it seems the young man has requested that Maria read Dante's works with him, which she explains would bring her 'very great pleasure […] were it practicable; but it is not.'[205] Maria's

[202] Thomas, *Christina Rossetti,* p.71.
[203] William Michael Rossetti letter to Maria Rossetti, dated 11th September 1873 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), (309-310), p.309.
[204] As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.
[205] Maria Rossetti letter to Oliver Madox Brown, dated 1874, Box 3. File.3 (Angeli-Dennis Collection, University of British Columbia). All subsequent references refer to this MS.
The recipient is in fact the son of Dante Gabriel's former artistic tutor, Ford Madox Brown, who will be discussed in Chapter Four.

regret is evident as she explains the restrictions of the Sisterhood: '[t]he educational pursuit which engage me are wholly for the benefit of the poor; and every spare moment is filled up with some kind of community work.' She repeats how she is 'very sorry' and 'unhappy' by this fact, and can only offer to 'relegate this mutual delight to the rare occasions of such home visits as may be long and free enough to afford the necessary leisure'. In studying the inherent godliness of Maria, one runs the risk of assuming she was not "sacrificing" her creativity, presupposing she relinquished her work freely. However, this surviving letter demonstrates a rare admission of loss in her no longer pursuing widespread publication.

Figure 13. Lucy Madox Brown, 'Maria Rossetti as an Anglican Nun' (Private Collection, circa.1873/74)

Whereas Christina could not surrender her art. Although she often feared this fact made her irreverent, as she grew more successful in her own vocation Christina viewed Maria far less as a threat to her own piety. Christina, like Maude, had to learn that another woman's successes were not her failures, and would soon accept Maria's superior piety. In fact, in her *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (1885) Christina describes her sister in almost saint-like terms. In her 17th February 1895 entry – what would have been Maria's fifty-eighth birthday –

Christina laments the loss of her sister, whose lips spoke 'the law of kindness'.[206] She explains how she 'reveres' the very memory of Maria, who taught her 'that unless we love people we cannot understand them.'[207] Christina portrays Maria as a woman who spoke nothing but Christian kindness, and depicts her 'decisive step in religion' – in other words, her joining the Sisterhood – as inevitable, if not necessary. While *Maude* found herself competing with the lily-pure Magdalen, Christina came to understand she and her sister could flourish in their separate callings, as she poignantly imagines in her 1877 poem 'Own Mother dear'[208]:

> Transfigured by Love's flame
>
> Yet still the same
>
> The same yet new (ll.7-9)

The 'flame' which Christina refers to here can be interpreted as the 'kindled fire' of nun-like devotion Christina described in 'The Three Nuns' (l.16). Christina recognises that Maria has been made happier, and therefore '[m]ade lovelier' (l.12) by her piety – bearing the 'halo' (l.15) of her saintly character. Yet the face she sees is still that of her sister, her second-mother, and her friend.

Heightened awareness of female expectations had altered the once predominantly harmonious collaborations of the Brontë and Rossetti siblings. Charlotte Brontë felt herself losing her authorial voice as Branwell had the freedom to continue their Angrian kingdom without her. Unfortunately, she could not quite utilise the diary format to maintain their connection as Emily and Anne could. Equally, Christina Rossetti found herself divided

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[206] Christina Rossetti, '17th February Entry', *Time Flies: A Reading Diary (1885)* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895), p.34.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Christina Rossetti, 'Own Mother dear (1877)' in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p.391.
Although the first line implies this poem was written with Frances in mind, the verse is in fact dedicated to 'M.F.R.' – Maria Francesca Rossetti. This shows the maternal role Maria fulfilled, as discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter One of this thesis.

between impressing her brothers' professional network, and joining the Sisterhood with her sister, Maria. These women strained to maintain their enthusiasm dedicated to their art as their former co-authors appeared to be persevering without them. Emily and Anne Brontë, for instance, were determined to maintain their sisterly as well as collaborative connection in their diary writings. Although Christina Rossetti often felt outdone by her sister's "superior" femininity, she would finally learn, Rosenblum argues: 'there is no friend like a sister, there is no power like that of the female community.'[209] In truth, the solidarity of sisterhood only increased in value for Brontë and Rossetti sisters as they attempted to fulfil their professional callings in a predominantly patriarchal culture.

[209] Dolores Rosenblum, *Christina Rossetti: The Poetry of Endurance* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), p.83.

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CHAPTER FOUR:

Prodigal Poets: "Playing" with Male Identity and Privilege amongst Literary Brothers

Great Expectations: Redefining Primogeniture in Literary Families

Sons of the nineteenth century – predominantly the first borns – were expected, as Claudia Nelson explains, to 'pattern themselves on their fathers.'[1] The cultural objective was for the son to succeed his father as a captain of his chosen industry and guardian of the family. The Brontë and Rossetti sons however sought to follow their fathers – not to the pulpits of clergyman or professor, respectively – but to the publishing house.[2] As with all middle-class young men of this era, they were expected to learn their craft and accumulate a professional network. The world appeared to be their oyster, especially when compared to the limited opportunities of their siblings. Both the Brontë and Rossetti sisters, and even William Michael Rossetti, were encouraged to seek stable work in order to help relieve the family's financial straits, as well as support the (eldest) brother's artistic exploits. The creative desires of each sibling were concentrated on Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and this chapter will determine how such responsibilities altered the sibling dynamic, particularly when it came to literary collaboration.

Charlotte Brontë encapsulated this shift in the sibling co-operation when contemplating Branwell's death in 1848, declaring: 'Branwell was his Father's and his Sisters' pride and hope in boyhood'.[3] While she and her sisters entered the drudgery of the governess trade, as

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[1] Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), p.91.

[2] Ostensibly, it would seem that these sons were jeopardising the security of their entire family by entering such subjective fields. As Sally Mitchell stresses, '[t]he most prosperous son was expected to make a home for his widowed mother or any unmarried sisters' following the deaths of their fathers. Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), p.108. Subsequently, the son would frequently balance his own career, the legacy of his father and the safeguarding of the future of his nuclear family, alongside securing a wife and progeny of his own to continue the family name.

[3] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith William, dated 2nd October 1848, in *The Brontës: A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997), pp.208-209.

explored in Chapter Three, Branwell remained in the security of the Parsonage. He continued his education through his father's tutelage, and his literary apprenticeship through Patrick's library. When Branwell had finally arrived 'at an age wherein I must do something for myself', he was determined that the 'powers' he possessed be 'exercised to a definite end'[4], either as a writer or a painter. As this chapter will verify, Branwell knew he bore the literary hopes his father and each of his sisters' on his shoulders, and committed to proving himself. The artistic prospects of the Rossettis also became temporarily expendable, with Frances and Maria – and even Christina to a lesser extent[5] – foregoing their creative pastimes to become teachers. Fortunately, there was a second son to bear the majority of pecuniary pressures. As Dante Gabriel sought training to perfect his painting, William Michael was confined to an office, much as the Brontë and Rossetti women were "exiled" to the schoolroom. Dynamics were quickly shifting and familial, as well as creative; resentment was brewing.

In their resolve to achieve creative recognition, both Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti approached their individual careers through unusually similar processes, as this chapter will explore in detail. Neither was eager to enter the "oppressive" schoolroom – fortunately, Patrick Brontë could bestow his Cambridge education of philosophy and the classics on his young son, which alleviated any potential expense of schooling Branwell.[6] Gabriele Rossetti was also providential in his capacity to provide an education for his sons, his position as a lecturer at King's College granting him the opportunity to send his sons to

[4] Branwell Brontë letter to William Wordsworth, dated 10th January 1837, *A Life in Letters* (45-46), p.45.

[5] As explained in Chapter Three of this thesis, Christina's ill health essentially ended her governess career before it began.

[6] Juliet Barker explains how he would flaunt 'his knowledge of Latin and Greek in his pseudo-scholarly notes to the works of Young Soult and Sergeant Bud' to his co-author Charlotte. (Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.193.) When Branwell does utilise Latin and/or Greek, it does not contribute to the story overall: 'the thistle latin carduss Greek σκολυμος a prickley weed abounding in Scotland & chiefly growing in Cornfields. [sic.]' (Branwell Brontë, 'Review of Buds commentary on Ossian (1829), *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë: 1827-1833,* Vol.2 Ed. Victor A. Neufeldt (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999) (27-29), p.28.)

King's School free of charge. The Rossetti brothers were not always grateful for this, as William Michael recalls: '[s]ome men seem to remember their school days with a sort of fondness […] such is not the case with myself, neither was it with Gabriel.'[7] While William Michael would continue at this institution, Dante Gabriel would enter Sass's Academy to improve his art and eventually seek a private "master" amongst the accomplished artists of the time. Branwell, similarly, sought the tutorials of local artist, William Robinson as well as famed poets such as William Wordsworth. Both applied for the Royal academy and began their creative careers as artists – rather than the poets their juvenilia suggested they would ultimately become. Nevertheless, while Branwell was eventually forced to earn a living through various professions – for example, as a tutor and a railroad clerk as a tutor – Dante Gabriel flourished as a painter. Branwell would die in obscurity, ultimately regarded by his sisters' biographers as a destructive squanderer of talent, whereas Dante Gabriel would be memorialised as a celebrated trailblazer of art. Terry Eagleton assesses Branwell's contemporary legacy: 'Drug addict and alcoholic, flushed with dreams of literary grandeur […] scribbling second-rate prose, experimenting with exotic pseudonyms and drawing pen portraits of himself hanged, stabbed or licked by the flames of eternal perdition.'[8] Consequently, Branwell-bashing has become synonymous with the family myth as critics and readers alike join Charlotte in her lamentation of 'the wreck of talent, the ruin of promise […] of what might have been a burning and shining light.'[9] Dante Gabriel's reputation during his life, being far more public than Branwell's, resulted in his being frequently criticised for flagrancy in his life and art, as his niece Helen Rossetti Angeli recalls: '[i]t is not excessive to say that no distinguished man of English art or letters of the nineteenth century has been so

[7] William Michael Rossetti, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their World A Personal View. From Some Reminiscences and Other Writings of William Michael Rossetti.* (London: The Folio Society, 1995), p.52.
[8] Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), p.1.
[9] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith Williams, dated 2nd October 1848, *Life in Letters* (208-209), p.209.

repeatedly and so unaccountably attacked as Dante Gabriel Rossetti.'[10] Nonetheless, his legacy, as Sarah Dempster explains, is one of a 'hirsute carouser, swaggering braggart, compulsive stroker of wenches' breastbones.'[11] Both men initially relinquished the collaborative atmosphere of their childhood in search of success, determined to mature both personally and professionally. This chapter will assess how one flourished while the other failed, both in spectacular fashion.

The distancing from their former familial literary network began for Branwell and Dante Gabriel when both young men sought a professional who would help them advance from their juvenile apprenticeships. The former sibling collaborations seemed insufficient to distinguish the ambitious men as artists. Consequently, in the Brontë Parsonage the year 1835 brought with it a 'grandiose plan to place Branwell at the Royal Academy', Juliet Barker explains, so he might become a famed painter.[12] Branwell and Patrick worked together to correspond with and secure the tutorials of William Robinson, an artist based in Leeds. Having previously had only his own inspiration to answer to, Branwell seems to have struggled with the concept of deadlines, with one letter to Mr. Robinson dated 16th November 1835, explaining: '[a]fter repeated delays, for which I am ashamed to apologise I have at length nearly completed my picture.'[13] His procrastination appears to have been reprimanded by Patrick: 'my Father desires me to request that you would name by Letter any day and time you may think proper.'[14] In fact, Patrick is mentioned twice in this missive and even wrote his own letter, accompanying his son's, expressing his thanks for the progress

[10] Helen Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p.2.
[11] Sarah Dempster, 'A date with the Desperate Romantics (Review), *The Guardian,* (2009) <https://theguardian.com/culture/tvandradioblog/2009/jul/22/desperate-romanctics> [accessed 7th January 2018]
[12] Barker, Ed. *Life in Letters,* p.32.
[13] Branwell Brontë letter to William Robinson, dated 16th November 1835, *Life in Letters* Barker, Ed. *A Life in Letters,* p.33.
[14] Ibid.

Branwell had made.[15] Patrick's supervision creates the image of a young man who must be coerced into completing his homework, and yet Branwell's tone is enthusiastic as he presents himself to Robinson as an 'Obedient Pupil.'[16] Although the direct collaboration within the Angrian kingdom was being tested, Patrick's encouragement of both Branwell and Mr. Robinson demonstrates that getting Branwell started as an artist was a family affair. It was this plan and the expected cost of such an enterprise which instigated the siblings' dispersal, with Charlotte beginning her life as a teacher at Roe Head that same year – taking Emily, and eventually Anne with her. Patrick's efforts also demonstrate how much the family needed Branwell to succeed to make these financial, as well as emotional, costs worthwhile.

Branwell appears to have comprehended the family's anxieties from his determined and yet vulnerable letters to the secretary of the Royal Academy outlining his 'earnest desire to enter as a Probationary Student in the Royal Academy but not being possessed of information as to the means of obtaining my desire'.[17] Unfortunately his wish would be left incomplete, as Barker states, 'the Royal Academy plan, like an equally ambitious scheme for Branwell to go on a Continental tour to further his artistic education, fell through, probably because of a lack of money.'[18] The pressure to succeed only increased as the uneventful years continued for Branwell and he grew increasingly determined to 'push out into the open world' to 'launch the vessel' of his career.[19] In one of their final acts of collaboration, Branwell sought the assistance of William Wordsworth at the same moment his sister Charlotte was compiling a letter to Robert Southey.[20] In his correspondence, Branwell insists that Wordsworth read his verse: 'I most earnestly entreat you to read and pass your judgement upon what I have sent

[15] Patrick Brontë letter to William Robinson, dated 16th November 1835, *Life in Letters,* pp.33-34.
[16] Branwell Brontë letter to William Robinson, dated 16th November 1835, p.33.
[17] Branwell Brontë letter to the Secretary of the Royal Academy, dated July 1835, *Life in Letters,* p.32.
[18] Barker, Ed. *A Life in Letters*, p.32.
[19] Branwell Brontë letter to William Wordsworth, dated 10th January 1837, *Life in Letters,* (45-46), p.46.
[20] Please refer to Chapter Three of this thesis to view Southey's response to this correspondence.

you',[21] proceeding to weave a story of an isolated young artist waiting to be discovered: 'from the day of my birth to this the nineteenth year of my life I have lived among wild and secluded hills where I could neither know what I was or what I could do'.[22] Branwell was already constructing an exaggerated version of himself to help "sell" his work, asking for Wordsworth to recognise that he is unable to do anything but write: 'I read for the same reason,' Branwell writes, 'that I eat or drank – because it was a real craving of Nature.'[23] Rather than addressing Wordsworth as an intellectual, Branwell writes as an addict unable to get a sufficient "fix" of literary collaboration. Charlotte's tone was equally hyperbolic as she described Southey as belonging on a 'throne of light and glory'; however she was praising Southey directly. In contrast, Branwell speaks entirely of himself and his wish that his poetry would 'brighten and crown' his own name 'with glory'.[24] The overemphasis was mistaken for mockery and Wordsworth, 'disgusted by the letter […] did not reply.'[25] Although Branwell's writing style is embellished, one cannot overlook his argument that he 'could neither know what I was or what I could do' when he had so few opportunities to hand due to financial and geographical restrictions. Charlotte also refers to this isolation in her 'Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell (1850)', describing their early life in the Parsonage as: 'a perfectly secluded life gave them retiring manners and habits. […] [and] limited experience.'[26]

While the Brontës lived far from a metropolis where one could easily network with fellow artists, the Rossettis were in the literary cradle of London. It was an advantage that benefitted Dante Gabriel far more than he could have imagined. Much like Branwell, Dante Gabriel applied to the Royal Academy on two occasions in 1844, and in both cases he failed.

[21] Branwell Brontë letter to William Wordsworth, dated 10th January 1837, *Life in Letters,* pp.45-46.
[22] Ibid., p.46.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Branwell Brontë letter to William Wordsworth, dated 10th January 1837, *Life in Letters*, p.46.
[25] Robert Southey cited in Simon Armitage and Ann Dinsdale, Eds. *Mansions in the Sky: The Rise and Fall of Branwell Brontë* (Norwich: Swallowtail Print Ltd., 2017), p.24.
[26] Charlotte Brontë, 'Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell' in Emily and Anne Brontë, *Wuthering Heights & Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), (v-xiii), p.xii.

Branwell and his father were forced to admit defeat with the possibility of them not being able to afford his accommodation in London. In contrast, Dante Gabriel could persist since he was able to remain at home whilst studying – his application was finally accepted in December 1845. The family's residence on Charlotte Street meant his accommodation fees were not a drain on his family's finances, and he could return to the Bohemian paradise of home when the learning environment grew too uninspiring.

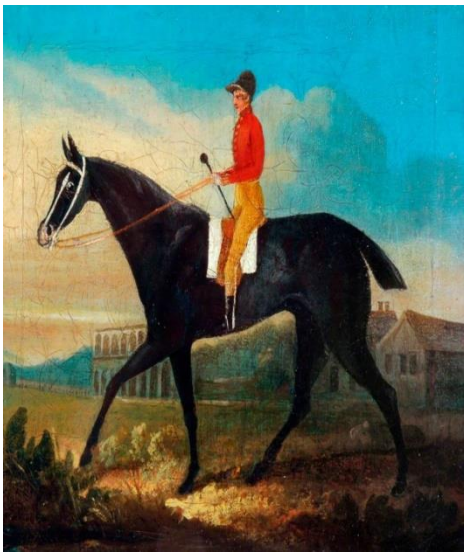

Figure 1. Branwell Brontë, 'Horse with Rider' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1834-35) [completed under William Robinson's tutelage]

Dante Gabriel did not; however, appear to appreciate his good fortune. He believed that the traditional training of the academy did not target the 'apparently insignificant technicalities'[27] which would make him a great artist. Subsequently, the end of 1847 was full of diligent attempts to network by Dante Gabriel amongst established poets and painters. Much like Branwell, he optimistically sought the advice of venerated writers such as Robert Browning, William Bell Scott and Leigh Hunt. However, unlike Branwell, Dante Gabriel knew how to present himself amongst more experienced writers – a talent possibly acquired by interacting with his father Gabriele's colleagues[28] - with Leigh Hunt asserting: '[i]f you paint as well as you write, you may be a rich man.'[29] The family's location in the nation's capital was

[27] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Charlotte Polidori, dated February 1848, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2, p.35.
[28] Please refer to Chapter Two of this thesis to analyse Gabriele's Italian network of poets and writers.
[29] Leigh Hunt letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, dated 31st March 1848, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, (122-123), p.123.

certainly useful when Dante Gabriel began his search for professional instruction as he was drawn to approaching Browning after finding a rare copy of his 1833 poem 'Pauline' in the British Library. Browning himself, J.B. Bullen writes, 'was rather ashamed of the poem' and 'tried to suppress it by buying up all the copies he could find and destroying them.'[30] The rarity of the piece demonstrates how fortunate Dante Gabriel was in discovering 'Pauline' and he contacted the poet with a view to flaunting his newly increased familiarity with poetry. He represented himself so convincingly that Browning 'had no idea that he was dealing with a boy of eighteen or nineteen.'[31] By 1848, however, Dante Gabriel desired more than requited flattery and soon realised that he would not find this professional guide amongst in-demand artists, who would be 'careless of obtaining pupils, or render their charges for instruction exorbitant'.[32] Instead, Dante Gabriel searched for an artist whom 'by some unaccountable accident [have] not obtained […] that renown which they merited'.[33] This decision would, as William Michael recalled, be 'one of the most important landmarks in the career of Dante Rossetti'[34] once he selected the up-and-coming Ford Madox Brown.

In this correspondence, admiration is intertwined with self-depreciating awareness of how Madox Brown can help improve his work, declaring him an idol with Brown's *Abstract Representation of Justice* hanging on the wall of his room.[35] Dante Gabriel assures Brown that he is not only a fan but a determined novice, commencing his letter – not with well-wishes or even his name – but simply stating: 'I am a student in the Antique School of the Royal Academy'.[36] In a case of unerring honesty, Dante Gabriel confesses that he has

[30] J.B. Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2011), p.31.
[31] Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, pp.31-32.
Bullen continues to explain that the pair eventually met when Dante Gabriel was better known, at which time they formed a significant acquaintance that stood Dante Gabriel in good stead. (p.32)
[32] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Charlotte Polidori, dated February 1848, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.2.,(34-35), p.35.
[33] Ibid.
[34] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.115.
[35] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Ford Madox Brown, dated 25th November 1847, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.112.
[36] Ibid.

'scarcely attempted' to practice with colour and the hope that Madox Brown's own adeptness in this aspect may encourage him to 'admit pupils to profit by your invaluable assistance.'[37] Dante Gabriel presents his lack of skill in certain subjects not as a hindrance but as an opportunity for Madox Brown to improve himself as a teacher. His confident tone even suggests that the artist should feel thankful of Dante Gabriel's esteem, writing as one would expect of a critic rather than a prospective student: '[the] glorious works you have exhibited have successfully raised my admiration.'[38] Like Wordsworth, Madox Brown was affronted by this apparent disrespect. Believing that 'Rossetti was mocking him' Bullen maintains, 'went round to Charlotte Street […] to sort out the whippersnapper'.[39] While Madox Brown was prepared for a fight, nineteen-year-old Dante Gabriel possessed such 'powers of persuasion, he won [Madox] Brown over so that not only did he agree to take him on as a pupil, he was willing to do so with no payment'.[40]

Figure 2. Ford Madox Brown, 'Byron's Dream' (Manchester Art Gallery, 1874)[41]

[37] Ibid.^

[38] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Ford Madox Brown, dated 25th November 1847, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.112.

[39] Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet,* p.32.

[40] Ibid., p.33.

[41] Byron rears his head in Dante Gabriel's seminal letter to Ford Madox Brown, in which he explains '[s]ince the first time I ever went to an exhibition […] (when I saw a picture of yours from Byron's *Giaour*) I have always listened with avidity if your name happened to be mentioned'. Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Ford Madox Brown, dated 25th November 1847, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1. Ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Roberts Brothers, 1895), p.112. Rossetti's letter gives the impression that he associated Byron's celebrity with his desire to become an "apprentice" of the arts.

Both Branwell and Dante Gabriel had apparently outgrown their early collaboration and sought a more experienced, specifically male, collaborator to improve their chances of success. Meanwhile, the Brontë and Rossetti sisters, as well as William Michael, watched as their brothers were nurtured in the profession from which they themselves had been dissuaded. The objective of this chapter is to examine the vicissitudes of the siblings' creative interactions as their cultural awareness heightened. Impending adulthood was causing the Brontë and Rossetti siblings to become increasingly aware of gender expectations, and William Michael more conscious of the unjust preference of birth-order. Consequently, the works of the luckless siblings during these formative periods exhibit a desire for an acknowledgement from their brothers of the support they offered throughout their careers, from juvenilia onwards. Their demand for recognition resulted in "read-and-response" writings that emerged during this period. In these pieces, the "disadvantaged" siblings examine the works of the (eldest) brother and would "respond" with their own piece of poetry or prose, subverting the motifs used by Branwell and Dante Gabriel. As a result, these siblings are compelling the brother to recall their collaborative juvenilia, in which gender and birth-order were predominantly immaterial.

The Rakes' Progress: Transforming Boyish "Play" into a Poetic "Self"

In their efforts to expand their creative educations, we can see that Branwell and Dante Gabriel believed that if they were to mature from the authorial "self" of their juvenilia, reinvention was required. Both men created seemingly invincible, confident personas beyond the 'Brannii' of the Glasstown Genii and Gabriel Charles from the family magazines, respectively. For Branwell, he took the celebrated hero of Angria, Alexander Percy – often known as 'Northangerland'[42] [Fig.3.] – and transformed him into a literary 'self'. Branwell would come to sign his works and even his correspondence with the moniker of

[42] As explored in Chapters One and Three of this thesis.

'Northangerland', assimilating with the persona to forge a Romantic "self" worthy of publication and fame. This alteration began in January 1831- May 1832 when a young Branwell was imagining an abrupt shift in Northangerland's character, from the battlefield hero Charlotte admired into the foil of debonair yet brutal pirate known by yet another name: "Rougue", a name which was not of Branwell's invention. Victor Neufeldt explains that a character named 'Old Rogue'[43] appears in Charlotte's piece 'Characters of the Celebrated Men of the Present Time (1829)' – included in Charlotte's Dramatis Personae of Angrian characters contained in this work – thus 'Rougue was initially created not by Branwell but by Charlotte, and then immediately disappears until he is appropriated by Branwell.'[44] Charlotte appears to have been uninspired by this character, but Branwell claims the name his sister used and imposes it on their former champion, Northangerland. He transforms from hero to radical, as Christine Alexander explains: '[m]odelled chiefly on Napoleon at this stage, Rogue leads a rebellion ending in a French Revolutionary 'terror' and provisional government in Verdopolis.'[45] In Branwell's *Real Life in Verdopolis* (1833), Northangerland (or rather, Rougue) and Arthur Wellesley lead an assault against the Verdopolitan prison, an Angrian equivalent of the Storming of the Bastille (14th July 1789) which sparked the French Revolution:

> a general shout through every lane and alley […] soon hailed the advent of this distinguished personage [he] appeared, advancing on horse back [sic.] pistol in one hand and his sword in the other tightening the reins of his steed he halted and pointing with his sword to the immense.[46]

This flashpoint of Angrian aggression demonstrates Branwell's persistent predilection for violence in his juvenilia, as James Reaney observes: '[o]ut of the historical past, he is creating

[43] Charlotte spells the character's name 'Rogue', where Branwell uses the unusual spelling 'Rougue'.
[44] For further information, please refer to Victor Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy. Part 1', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.42, Issue 3. (2017) (190-210), p.190.
[45] Christine Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.560.
[46] P. B. Bronte, *Real Life in Verdopolis* in *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë: 1827-1833,* Vol.1 Ed. Victor A. Neufeldt (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999) (266-295), p.272.

an epic that cares not for what really happened, but for an exciting Verdopolitan account.[47] The conflict continues when Rougue coordinates a second rebellion in the district known as 'Sneaky's Land', which ends with him being captured and shot. '[B]ut Branwell "resurrects" him,' Alexander clarifies, 'in 'The Pirate' and thus begins Rougue's upwardly mobile career under the successive titles of Alexander Percy, Lord Ellrington, Earl of Northangerland, and Prime Minster of Angria.'[48] Branwell had been "playing" with this morality-makeover ever since Charlotte left for Roe Head School, the renovation was complete in 1833 when he wrote 'The Pirate'[49] – in this piece the Rougue character imagines Northangerland if he were relieved of the pressures of a nobleman and war hero and instead living the liberated life of a tempestuous pirate. This hero was a hybrid of businessman and pirate, with a reputation for ruthlessness. His callous attitude at sea is commoditised on land: 'I've been on my voyages! Ha! I've turned merchant, you see. No, not so, I am Admiral. But I've not hit it yet. I'm more – I'm Rougue. I am all three. I am three in one.' (329) The multiple facets which contribute to his personality may account for the character's changeable nature, until Rougue becomes a 'demon-ridden avatar [worthy] of James Hogg's *Justified Sinner*'[50], just as Robert G. Collins would come to describe his author in his final years.

Hogg's magnum opus *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) reads: '[w]e are all subjected to two distinct natures in the same person. I myself have suffered grievously in that way'.[51] Equally, Rougue shifts between his heroic self and his more Gothic re-imaginings - he is debonair and debauched, 'princely' yet 'insidious and serpent-like' (329) with a predilection for brandy. The fallen-champion of Angria becomes fixated on drink to drown the sufferings experienced by his previous incarnations, substantiating Emma

[47] James C. Reaney, 'A Fresh Look at Patrick Branwell Brontë: the Prose', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol. 26, No.1 (2001) (1-9), p.3.
[48] Christine Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal*, p.560
[49] Branwell Brontë, 'The Pirate (1833)', *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal* (328-340).
[50] Robert G. Collins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold: Retrieving the Prose Chronicles', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol. 21, Issue 6 (1996) (253-259), p.253.
[51] James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Harlow: Longman, 1824), p.293.

Butcher's argument that in Angria 'alcoholism manifests alongside war trauma'.[52] Rougue consumes copious amounts of raw brandy with indifference 'as if it had been cold water' (331). The brandy emphasises his new allegiance to the sea as the spirit is frequently attributed to the navy, and the fact Rougue consumes this drink prior to the decisive action of 'The Pirate' recalls Dr Johnson's mantra: 'he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy'.[53] He "must" drink in order to fight, a coping mechanism Barker argues the Brontës learned from the 'unsettling mentality' Butcher contends was evident in 'over 200 military memoirs' which were published after the Battle of Waterloo, many of which were printed in Charlotte and Branwell's favourite publication; *Blackwood's Magazine*. One of *Blackwood's* most celebrated contributors, James Hogg, also contributed to what Barker deems Charlotte and Branwell's 'apparent obsession with drunkardness'[54]. His *Justified Sinner*, for instance, describes how his protagonist 'pushed the bottle so long and so freely, that its fumes had taken possession of every brain to such a degree, that they held Dame Reason rather at the staff's end, overbearing all her counsels and expostulations.'[55] Branwell was particularly inspired during the period he was (re)inventing his own licentious character of Rougue, as on 8th December 1835 he wrote to the editor of *Blackwood's,* recommending himself as a juvenile replacement for James Hogg. The celebrated author was no longer contributing to the publication, but Branwell assured the editor: 'You have lost an able writer in James Hogg and God grant you may gain one in Patrick Branwell Brontë.'[56] Unsurprisingly, he received no reply. In this correspondence, Branwell could almost be practising the overconfident tone he

[52] Emma Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* Vol.22, Issue 4. (465-481) , p.475.
[53] Samuel Johnson, *The Life of Samuel Johnson: Including a Trip to the Hebrides,* Ed. James Boswell (New York: George Dearborn, 1833), p.207.
[54] Barker, *The Brontës,* p.193.
[55] Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, p.76.
[56] Branwell Brontë letter to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine,* dated 8th December 1835 in *A Life in Letters* (34-35), p.35.

would present to Wordsworth – selling himself as a newfound genius, his writing being 'superior to that of any series [sic.] of articles'[57] the magazine had yet seen.

Intriguingly, six days prior to sending his letter to Wordsworth, Branwell once again entreated the opinion of *Blackwood's* editor, including work for the gentleman to peruse: 'You can neither know what you refuse or whom you are refused […] Do you think your Magazine so perfect that no addition to its power would be either possible or desirable? […] Be a Man – Sir!'[58] Unfortunately for the editor, he had received similarly belligerent missives from Hogg himself throughout his career at *Blackwood's*: 'I have several heavy charges against you. In the first place you are the crabbedest cappernoityest [sic.] worst tempered deevil [sic.] I ever saw. What kind of letter was your last to write to a poet?'[59] We do not know if Branwell would have known that Hogg displayed the same pugnaciousness in his correspondence as he did in his fiction, however it is clear that Branwell was developing a misapprehension that one had to be cantankerous to succeed as a man in the publishing world. One misguided belief which shaped Branwell's outlook for the rest of his life was the concept that one had to be "tortured" to write tormented characters. In 1835 Branwell saw his unaffected life as an asset for *Blackwood's*: 'I know that I am not one of the wretched writers of the day, I know that I possess strength to assist you beyond some of your own contributors.'[60] However, by 1837, Branwell was beginning to suspect that if one wished to follow men like Hogg, one had to *become* Hogg. Consequently, while exploring public identity through Rougue, and using 'The Pirate' to separate himself from collaborative

[57] Branwell Brontë letter to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine,* dated 4th January 1837 letter, *Life in Letters,* pp.44-45.
[58] Branwell Brontë letter to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine,* 4th January 1837 in *A Life in Letters* (44-45), p.45.
[59] James Hogg letter to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine,* 28th February 1829 in *James Hogg: Contributions to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 2, 1829-1835,* Ed. Thomas C. Richardson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.xiii.
[60] Branwell Brontë letter to the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine,* dated 8th December 1835 in *A Life in Letters* (34-35), p.35.

childhood and 'be a man!', the protagonist becomes an amalgamation of both fictional and famous men – as Branwell himself would become in later years.

Aesthetically, as well as in his need for passion and individuality, Rougue also mirrors himself on the poet with whom Tom Mole maintains 'celebrity culture began'[61]: Lord Byron. Rougue, for instance, dresses entirely in 'black cloaks, swords and visors' (332), his sombre colours reflecting Byron's penchant for black - Doris Langley Moore explains that Byron was known for his 'sombre colours' with an 'addiction to black', which was simultaneously unusual and brazen 'because its use was generally confined to the clerical and legal professions.'[62] Byron enjoyed inverting these dull associations and making black an "alluring" colour, he also found the connotations of black with mourning contributed to his mystique. For Rougue, the colour carries a literal declaration of mourning for his former chivalrous self, and the end of the Angrian collaboration as Branwell sought to forge a literary identity.[63] Byron created an alternative public persona for himself as someone who could "give the people what they want": a rakish Romantic. So enthralling was the façade, according to Andrew McConnell Stott, 'as Byron's star ascended, it became progressively difficult to view him outside the distortions of celebrity.'[64] Fashion, for instance, was experiencing a renewed Byronism led by great social figures such as Benjamin Disraeli. Byron was considered a role model and idol by Disraeli who, Ian St John writes, 'dressed in black […] had himself rowed on Lake Geneva during a thunderstorm by Byron's boatman Maurice and eventually acquired the services of Byron's servant Tita.'[65] If one wished to reach Byron's astronomical celebrity status, one could – or so Branwell believed – simply emulate Byron's iconography. Consequently, while Rougue imitates Byron's fashion, his story emulates that of Byron's own pirate: 'The Corsair

[61] Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.xi

[62] Doris Langley Moore, *Lord Byron: Accounts Rendered* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p.194.

[63] He possibly also wears black in mourning for Northangerland's deceased daughter Mary Percy – as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

[64] Andrew McConnell Stott, *The Vampyre Family: Passion, Envy, and the Curse of Byron* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2013), p.11.

[65] Ian St. John, *Disraeli and the Art of Victorian Politics,* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), p.3.

(1812)'.[66] The very structure of Branwell's story is a mirror-image of Byron's highly popular tale, his 1833 prose opens: 'The Pirate. A Tale. By Captain John Flower. […] by The Author of 'Letters from an Englishman' (328), where Byron's reads: 'The Corsair. A Tale. By Lord Byron […] by The Author of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' (i). Branwell naturally sought to learn from Byron's tale, its alluring protagonist having caused the book to sell fourteen-thousand copies on its first day. If Branwell wanted to create a Romantic pirate, this was the text to emulate – if Branwell wished to design a public persona, Byron was the "master" to study.

Figure 3. Charlotte Brontë, 'Alexander Percy, or Northangerland'
(Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1830-32)
Figure 4. Branwell Brontë, 'The Pirate' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1835)

Constructing a second, more alluring, aspect of one's self was a frequent practice of nineteenth-century publicity, as Byron and Hogg demonstrate. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, however, had an example of just what a passionate, poetic persona could achieve in his own household, in the form of his father: Gabriele.[67] The Rossetti patriarch "marketed" himself as

[66] Lord George Gordon Byron, *The Corsair: A Tale* (1812) (London: John Murray, 1814). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[67] As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

an exiled, friendless Romantic in order to survive in London, and Dante Gabriel would build upon his father's Italian and poetic heritage to create a sense of artistic dynasty. Just as Gabriele believed himself born for poetic success, sharing his 'own native soil' with Ovid[68], Dante Gabriel believed himself the prodigy of his literary heritage. Consequently, an early Rossetti family myth tells of how: 'A milkman came in at that moment, and was not a little surprised: "I saw a baby making a picture", he said to the servant.'[69] Dante Gabriel recalled that this picture was of a rocking-horse later conveyed to William Michael that he believed himself to have been 'about four […] when we were talking over our earliest reminiscences.'[70] [Fig.5.] This surprisingly detailed sketch, William Michael explains, was the 'first attempt at drawing made by the future painter of *Beata Beatrix.*'[71] William adds the caveat that this is the date his brother 'himself named', yet he had some difficulty in 'conceiving that he had never before taken pencil in hand […] the performance comes so near to being pretty tolerably good.'[72] By 1872, the date of this recollection, the public perception of Dante Gabriel as an eccentric was well established. William's cynical tone suggests that Dante Gabriel had subscribed so deeply to his own creative identity that his memories had amalgamated with family fabrications. In spite of his misgivings with the "rocking-horse anecdote", William states: '[h]aving once begun, Dante never dropped this notion of drawing', nor did he recall any time 'at which it was not understood in the family that "Gabriel meant to be a painter."'[73] His use of quotation marks infers this statement to be a direct quote, a mantra reiterated throughout his childhood, especially as he has now stripped his brother of his artistic moniker and refers to him by his birth name: "Gabriel Charles". The preservation of his brother's original name order - "Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti" - was sentimentally significant to William Michael. Although omitted from the final

[68] Gabriele Rossetti, *The Versified Autobiography of Gabriele Rossetti,* 1901, Ed. William Michael Rossetti. MS. Eng.Misc.330 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.6.
[69] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.42.
[70] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.42.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid, p.43.
[73] Ibid.

publication of his *Reminiscences,* in the manuscript of the first edition William Michael explains his alternating between his brother's given and chosen names:

> I have hitherto ~~called~~ ~~named~~ spoken of my Brother ^as "Gabriel", that being his first Christian name, and the one by which has was ~~from first to~~ to the very last called in the family […] But, as he adopted the form "Dante Gabriel" soon after entering upon professional life, I shall, from this point onwards, mostly use the name "Dante".[74]

It is significant that in this handwritten manuscript, when William Michael writes 'my Brother as "Gabriel"', the word "as" has clearly been added later with a caret (^) inserted between the words and the quotation marks framing the name have also been added in the same, finer hand as this adjunct. Thus, the original free-hand read: 'spoken of my Brother Gabriel, that being his first Christian name'. This brief slip of the Dante mask was not what the public wanted. William Michael does not entirely deconstruct and directly question the Dante Gabriel myth, but writes with a sceptical tone that encourages the reader to do so for themselves – a voice he would continue to use throughout his family biographies.

Figure 5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Rocking-Horse' (Private Collection, circa.1834)

[74] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences:* Vol.1 (MS. Eng. misc. d. 331) (1907) (Bodleian Library), p.51.

His treatment of his memories of "Gabriel Charles" and his presence in those Rossetti myths reminds the reader that they will never fully "know" this famous figure as well as he did. Throughout the multitude of family biographies William Michael includes scenes from the early family life to prove he has an advantage above all other biographers – he remembers Dante Gabriel's experiences directly, many of which his brother's admirers would not have heard.[75] One experience William Michael recounts, which must have provoked envy in Dante Gabriel's greatest enthusiasts, was his bearing witness to the 'full development' of Dante Gabriel's poetic 'faculty'.[76] William Michael argues Dante Gabriel reached his entire potential by 1847 – although an extremely specific recollection, he explains the proof to be 'that he wrote 'The Blessed Damozel' before 12 May of that year, or while still in the nineteenth year of his age.'[77] Although this piece began as juvenilia celebrated amongst the Rossetti/Polidori family[78] – so much so that Dante Gabriel included a manuscript copy within his appeal for tutorials from Madox Brown[79] - it was eventually published in the first edition of *The Germ* in 1849. Subsequently, Jan Marsh explains, 'The Blessed Damozel' came to represent 'the inspiration fount of Pre-Raphaelitism.'[80] The piece depicted the most ideal of the Brotherhood's models, the unattainable women. Speaking from beyond the grave, this divine stunner is both unsullied and untouchable as she dreams 'of the approach of her earthly lover and their heavenly reunion.'[81] Consequently, the earthbound man for whom she pines attempts to accept his loss: 'Alas for lonely Heaven! Alas | For life wrung out alone'.[82] By emphasising his status as biographer and witness to the creation of 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti' and the poetic pinnacle of Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic, William Michael is reclaiming his brother as part of the family and not just an inflated celebrity. Moreover, he

[75] As will be discussed further in Chapter Five of this thesis.
[76] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.107.
[77] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.107.
[78] As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.
[79] Ibid, p.113.
[80] Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p.56.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel' in *Poems. A New Edition.* (London: Ellis & White, 1881), (pp.3-9), ll.93-94. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

stresses the significance of word-games and the ever-present combination of literary practice and "play" in the Rossetti household – thereby accentuating the importance of collaboration in Dante Gabriel's success. A particular pastime William Michael calls attention to is the brothers' *bouts-rimés* games.[83] The rules to this family game are summarised in Christina's 1850 novella *Maude*: 'Someone gives rhymes […] then all of us fill them up as we think fit. A sonnet is the best form to select.'[84] The practice of writing *bouts-rimés* sonnets was enjoyed by both Rossetti brothers and Christina from 1847-49, the years in which Dante Gabriel was contemplating how to begin his professional life. However, it was a prolific bonding exercise for the two brothers from 1847-48, when Dante Gabriel and William Michael would hide away in the former's room in 50 Charlotte Street: '[s]mall and bare and uncared-for it was,' Dante Gabriel recalls in his pivotal missive to Ford Madox Brown, 'but how many hours, which in retrospect seem glorious hours, have I not passed in it with my brother! how many books have we not read to one another, how many *bouts-rimés* sonnets have we not written'.[85] The fact that Dante Gabriel notes these sonnets in his petition to become Madox Brown's "apprentice" demonstrates how significantly he believed these *bouts-rimés* exercises prepared him for his future success. The voracity with which Dante Gabriel and William Michael created these sonnets – twenty six completed in total – emphasises the eldest Rossetti's impatience to join the professional, artistic world. Equally, William Michael would reiterate the importance of these sonnets as a foundational study in Dante Gabriel's poetic style, with the majority of the poems having been finished by Dante Gabriel, foreshadowing William Michael's role as his brother's editor. There is, however, one

[83] Christina's role in these games is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[84] Christina Rossetti, 'Maude' in *Christina Rossetti: Poems and Prose,* Ed. Simon Humphries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), (265-298), p.269.
[85] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Ford Madox Brown, dated 25th November 1847, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.117.

particular sonnet in which these roles are uncharacteristically reversed, even signed with William Michael's initials[86], titled 'The Blood's Winter (1848)'.[87] [Fig.6.]

This heavily annotated piece originally told the story of a man determined to better himself – possibly influenced by William's uninspiring office work, the first lines read like the war-cry of a soldier: '<I shall not conquer, much as I may strive, | For 'tis myself I conquer>' (ll.1-2). The poem is despondent, almost as cathartic as William Michael's narrator appears to be contemplating how he has spent his life, prior to a seemingly imminent death:

> <That in some moment> yet before I sink
>
> <For ever in> to death and my soul dive
>
> <Down without> knowing whither <ere it rive> (ll.2-4)

Although his life appears uninspiring, wallowing in the <chains that bind us> (l.5) to the responsibilities of our lives, there is one spark of happiness in the form of an unnamed lover. William Michael's speaker gives very little detail of the woman in question, only that '<she now dreams not of may> drive | <Her heart in towards me!>' (ll.7-8) It seems initially that the woman has forgotten their love, or simply that his affection is not reciprocated, yet as the poem continues William Michael reveals that the Beloved resides in the 'House of his Saints' (l.11). She, like Dante Gabriel's celebrated 'Blessed Damozel', is consigned to Heaven. Meanwhile, her earthbound lover yearns to reunite with her, but fears he shall never hold her again: 'my own hands will pull | Me down from her!' (ll.13-14) While the narrating lover's own end is on the horizon, he laments that he will never reunite with his Beloved because she is in Heaven, and he appears doomed to inferno: '<Oh God! Oh God!>' (l.12), the speaker cries in horror, '<My eyes feel burned and hot>' (l.14). The narrator does not explain

[86] The Rossetti brothers' *bouts-rimés* sonnets were always signed with the author's name, not the editor. Also, handwriting analysis proves the original text to be in William Michael's handwriting, and the edits in Dante Gabriel's.

[87] William Michael Rossetti, 'The Blood's Winter', Ed. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Special Collections Library, Duke University, 1848). Transcript of original MS. obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/35-1848.dukems.rad.html#35-1848> [accessed 5th February 2016] All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

what crimes he committed to warrant such a fate, but the sonnet ends abruptly on this rhyme – his damnation lingering at the close. Using the rhymes supplied by his brother, William Michael creates a mysterious conflict of love and sin. Nevertheless, the restrictive nature of these set rhymes meant these sonnets often required many edits – and Dante Gabriel altered his brother's work with multiple revisions. The original enigma is transformed into a replica of 'The Blessed Damozel'.

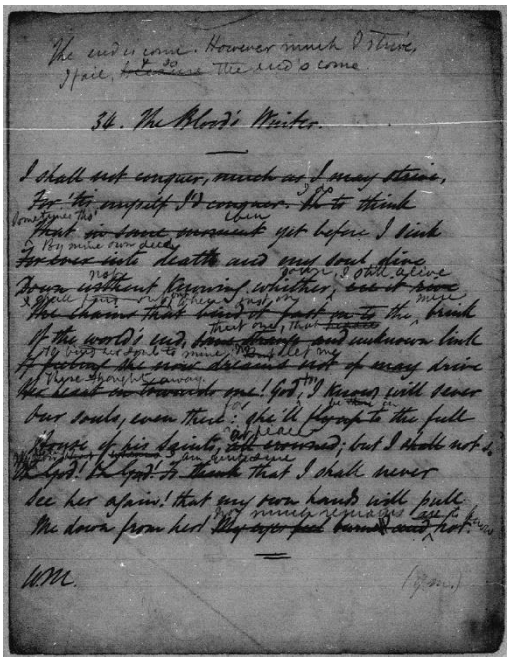

Figure 6. William Michael and Dante Gabriel Rossetti,
'The Blood's Winter' (Special Collections Library, Duke University, 1848)

Dante Gabriel seems to redefine his brother's story in his own image, transforming the infernal tone of 'The Blood's Winter' and the protagonist's hope that he will be reunited with his lover: 'Let me drive | Her heart towards me!' into one of conceding loss: 'Let me drive | These thoughts away.' (ll.10-11) The hopelessness is reminiscent of the Blessed Damozel's lover, who yearns to reunite with his Beloved in Heaven so she may become 'one' with him.[88] The wait is torturous as the lover struggles to move on from his lost love, imagining how much she is missing him – or so he hopes: she 'laid her face between her hands, | And wept.

[88] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel' in *Poems. A New Edition.* (London: Ellis & White, 1881), (pp.3-9), l.98.

(I heard her tears).'[89] However, unlike 'The Blessed Damozel', Dante Gabriel's edits to 'The Blood's Winter' retain William Michael's original implication that the narrator's own death is imminent, altering William Michael's poignant first line with the ominous declaration: 'I fail, and so the end is come' (l.1). Although the narrator's newly imposed 'failure' is never revealed, the act has resulted in his lying on his deathbed, awaiting a heavenly reunion:

> Shall find out but when just on the mere brink
> Of the world's end, that one, that unknown link
> To bind her soul to mine. (ll.5-7)

No longer fearing a descent into hell, the lover instead yearns for eschatological verification – he needs to know heaven, and therefore his lost love, will be waiting for him on the other side. This parallels the later editions to 'The Blessed Damozel' when Dante Gabriel grants the Damozel's lover a stronger voice, as he imagines her tangibly returning to him in his desperation to see her: '(Surely she lean'd o'er me—her hair | Fell all about my face… |)'[90] These two earthly lovers share a desire to be unified in heaven, but also in marriage, to their paramours – where the Damozel declares she will ask Christ himself to allow them 'to live as once on earth | With love'[91], William Michael's usurped protagonist wishes for his lover to 'bind her soul to mine' (l.10). In William Michael's version, their heavenly reunion is hindered by the narrator's forthcoming descent into hell. Although it seems Dante Gabriel intended to keep the original ending, maintaining his declaration 'Oh God! I am quite sure that I shall never | See her again' (ll.12-13), William Michael's 'burning feet' image is redacted and replaced with the cryptic line: 'No, much remains to know.' The lover's fate is uncertain, their reunion not guaranteed. Consequently, we see why both the Rossetti brothers consider these sonnets to be so important in the "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" design as he was already fixated on the deathly-aesthetic which shaped his Pre-Raphaelite image.

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[89] Ibid., ll.141-144.
[90] These lines were added to *The Blessed Damozel* circa. 1873, and are included on the poem extract written on the base of the frame of the painting (designed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti).
[91] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel', ll.129-130.

Hence, by allowing him to reiterate and improve these 'Blessed Damozel' motifs that made him famous in their collaborative juvenilia, William Michael believed that he had helped shape the "DGR" image. 'The Blood's Winter' embodies the dynamic that would lead William Michael to become the neglected critical figure whose legacy Angela Thirwell summarises as having 'invented our view of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood' and yet he 'is the least understood'.[92] In these manuscripts, for instance, his abilities were literally overruled by Dante Gabriel's passionate images. Although William Michael was 'promoter, transcriber, writer and editor' – correcting his brother's work throughout their lives and even being the first to publish 'The Blessed Damozel' – the poem encapsulates the brothers' professional dynamic. Underneath Dante Gabriel's crossings, we can see William Michael's cathartic demands that his role in his family's success – or more importantly, his sacrifice – was recognised.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was fixated on the path that would guarantee his fame but moreover, as we witnessed in his eagerness to leave the Royal Academy, he wished to fast-track the progress. It was a flaw both he and Branwell shared. While Branwell's story is clearly inspired by Byron's, it is not a straightforward mimicry. The story of Byron's Corsair, Conrad, follows him as he raids ships on the Mediterranean as well as the palace of the Muslim Pacha, Seyd, where he is captured; eventually charming Seyd's harem queen, Gulnare, whom he rescues from the burning palace. Branwell's 'The Pirate' finds Rougue living, as Neufeld describes, 'in a fine style at a splendid mansion, yet no one knows […] the source of the income'[93]. It is revealed he has been monitoring a business named Rougue Sdeath and Co. where he trades what his pirate crew "obtains". When Angrian favourites Wellington and Napoleon discover his conduct he returns to the sea. Upon the ocean, he kidnaps Lady Zenobia Elrington, whom he eventually marries. Echoes of Byron's tale evident in Branwell's

[92] Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.1.
[93] Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy', p.197.

can be seen in Rougue/Conrad's leadership style; the desire to become a Byronic hero and his dynamics with women. The carnal connection between man and woman was a standard trope of Byron's fiction – embodied in women such as the harem queen – however, just as narrator John Flowers describes the meeting of Zenobia and Rougue, he abruptly interrupts the romance: 'I must now for a moment turn to another incident' (338). This "incident" is the mutiny and subsequent death of Rougue's partner and crewmate, Old Sdeath. When Rougue grows tired of Old Mr Sdeath's disobedience, the captain shoots the man in the head. The action seems standard of a pirate narrative, and yet something unusual occurs once the body is thrown overboard: 'flashes of fire came bursting around. They were the Chief Genii TALLI, EMII & ANNII.' (339) Branwell's sisters' second-selves descend from their elevated status and confront Rougue, only for it to then be revealed that 'ere this little hideous bloody old man' was in fact 'the cheif [sic.] Genius BRANNII' (339), who had taken 'Old Sdeath' as his human form, through which he could cause mayhem in the narrative. It was not unusual for the female Genii to intervene when Branwell became too preoccupied with violence, as explored in Chapter Two, when Charlotte's Twelve Soldiers arrived on the Guinea coast they are confronted by 'The Genius of the Storm' (9) who nearly caused their deaths - Brannii. To prevent his causing more grief for the soldiers, Charlotte's own Genii form, Talli, orders '"Genius, I command thee to forbear!"' (9) The death of the author in 'The Pirate' however is a far more definitive action than the siblings' former artistic differences. Branwell appears to be declaring his intention to remove himself from the collaboration as Rougue's embodiment usurps Brannii in all respects, even physically: 'his tall and statly [sic.] form […] his hair once a bright auburn' (329). Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars recognise the similarities in Branwell's later sketch 'The Pirate' (1835) [Fig.4.] and note how the profile is exceedingly similar to Branwell's later self-portraits.[94] Branwell was amalgamating himself with the adventurous, desirable author he wished to be. Thus, Branwell is killing his

[94] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, Eds. *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.321.

childhood self and announcing the birth of a new, more Romantic persona, with which he intended to achieve celebrity.

Through Rougue, Branwell Brontë was creating a veritable Frankenstein's Monster of Romantic celebrity – culminating in the death of his former authorial "self", Brannii – now he needed a female Beloved to augment his image. By the end of 'The Pirate', Rougue announces his intention to 'settle down and become Alexander Rougue, Viscount Elrington and husband of the Lady Zenobia Elrington, the bonniest lass in the Glass Town.' (339) Having become a prisoner/guest upon his ship, Lady Zenobia is enticed by his rakish charms, having 'changed her thoughts for the better' (338), looking upon her captor in a favourable light. She is seduced by his Romantic reputation and physical prowess and, in marrying him, Zenobia is transferring her inheritance over to him – all she has becomes his. In becoming her husband, Rougue is gaining influence on land – however, we must ask why he would wish to surrender the freedom of the sea. Rougue shirks the civilised mask of the businessman at the beginning of the narrative, yet by the story's conclusion he is restored to his former nobleman status, becoming the new Viscount Elrington. Having "obtained" Zenobia, Rougue begins to once again resemble his previous 'Northangerland' persona, switching the dishevelled appearance of a swashbuckler for 'elegant dress and his best looks' (338). He is reinstated to the gentleman – if only in appearance – he was when originally imagined by Charlotte,[95] and imagined as 'the form & spirit of a Roman hero' (338). The restoration of his birth rank through his union with a woman demonstrates Branwell's intention to return Rougue to his original author, Charlotte, once he had utilised the figure in an exercise of literary masculinity.

Zenobia is tempted by Rougue's charms, but she also tames his rebellious nature, all while being a prisoner upon his ship. Significantly, Zenobia does not force Rougue to surrender his

[95] This character's heroic origins were discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

pirate position; rather she facilitates a return to the stability of land Rougue has desired throughout the entire narrative. Consider how Rougue, who also attempts to maintain ultimate authority over his crew, runs his pirate ship as he does his business on land. When his right-hand man Mr Sdeath questions his orders, Rougue violently replies: 'you begin your impudence I'll blow your brain out."' (330) Moreover, at sea when Old Sdeath kills thirty prisoners without permission, Rougue cries: 'Get down below you ugly brute! I did not tell you to do this!' (337) When we imagine the term "pirate", the image which comes to mind is of a treasure-hunting degenerate, thirsty for freedom and power. While Rougue accordingly desires liberty, there is an inherent need for control rather than command. His ship is egalitarian, the crew largely allowed to act as they wish, and yet Rougue seems at odds with this culture. Rougue's un-piratical distaste for excessive violence and chaos mirrors that of Byron's Conrad, who describes himself as 'warped' (I.251). Kirsty J. Harris observes the Corsair's need for discipline in the 'ungovernable realm of the sea'[96], initially describing himself and his crew in nautical terms, implying a sense of oneness with the open ocean, yet he only speaks in these metaphors when he is trying to seize control. For instance, when the crew bombard the gates of the harem, Byron describes them as 'pouring' into the palace, like a destructive flood (II, 152). His attempts to process chaos in familiar terms backfire and the crew is captured, now the 'flow' of his plan is intercepted and his is 'forced to ebb' (ll, 180-86). Byron, in true adventure-fiction style, forces his protagonist to face his greatest fears, as a now imprisoned Conrad faces the nightmare of no longer being in control. Like Rougue, Byron depicts Conrad as a 'self-emancipated nobleman who yet remains a slave to an oppressive, patriarchal system which cannot thrive in the law-denying, sea-bound world of piracy'.[97] Both Conrad and Rougue cannot assent to the fluidity of the pirate's life due to the elitist lands they were born into; they cannot shed the need for control. Consequently, Zenobia is viewed by Rougue as an escape from the vicissitudes of the confused life of a

[96] Kirsty J. Harris, '"My Soul is Changed": Pirate Identity and Shifting Power in Byron's *Corsair*', *Byron Journal* 44.1 (2016), p.56.
[97] Kirsty J. Harris, '"My Soul is Changed": Pirate Identity and Shifting Power in Byron's *Corsair*', p.64.

pirate. The story's innate desire for control whilst experimenting with various identities demonstrates Branwell's own need for security. He was attempting to forge a public self that would prove himself worthy of 'his father's and his sister's pride and hope.'[98] As Catherynne M. Valente argues, Branwell 'knew the burden of being the hero of all their games, and indeed their lives, rested firmly with him.'[99]

Under pressure to lead, Branwell's protagonist seeks a source of support that can help him reach his full potential. Upon meeting Lady Zenobia, Rougue believes he has found exactly this. The role of the Beloved as a "saviour" of the man from his own hyper-masculinity is one explored in 'The Corsair', through the principal woman and harem-queen, Gulnare. At once impure and yet unattainable – as a "possession" of the Pacha – Harris describes Gulnare as both a 'commander of and commanded by men.'[100] Although Gulnare is "owned" by the Pacha, she is able to alter Conrad's fate with her influence, declaring: 'I have power | To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour' (II, 460-61). Consequently, Byron's heroine triggers the most significant scenes of reimagining and reinvention in Byron's poem. She betrays the Pacha, frees Conrad from prison and seizes the opportunity this chaos brings. Caroline Franklin explains how it is Gulnare's 'resourceful and independent'[101] nature that allows her to transform herself into a heroine, and eventually declare herself the new ruler in place of the overthrown Pacha by the end of the tale. While Zenobia is depicted as sensually as Gulnare, she too possesses a power to influence men. Neufeldt, for instance, highlights how Zenobia was originally used by Charlotte in 1831-32 as an opponent of Marian Hume, a 'rival[ry] for [the] affections' of the Marquis of Douro. She is a seductress who restores order, much like Gulnare, satisfying Rougue's need for control without relinquishing her own.

[98] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith William, dated 2nd October 1848, in *The Brontës: A Life in Letters,* Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Viking, 1997), pp.208-209.
[99] Catherynne M. Valente, *The Glass Town Game* (New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2017), p.12,
[100] Harris, '"My Soul is Changed": Pirate Identity and Shifting Power in Byron's *Corsair*', p.60.
[101] Caroline Franklin, *Byron's Heroines* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.78-79.

While Branwell is clearly aping Byron here, we must ask why – after his efforts to separate Brannii from the female Genii – he allows his "untameable" pirate to align himself with a woman. It seems Brannii's disassociation from the Genii is not as axiomatic as it first appears since Branwell does not entirely free himself or his characters from the influence of women. Although the death of Brannii alters the sibling dynamic of the Genii, Rougue discovers a new rapport through his romantic connection with Zenobia. It is the adult relationship with the lover that empowers the hero, not the childish connection of the sister or the co-author. The Beloved, therefore, became a figure which Branwell would seek throughout his career.

Having deconstructed the image of the Byronic hero in 'The Pirate', Neufeldt describes how Branwell grew bored of the character and "resets" him to the 'pin-up' status of his sisters' 'more "feminine" imaginings.'[102] Rougue returns as Northangerland – or rather his other name, Alexander Percy – but Branwell has distorted him into an unrecognisable state for Charlotte. Charlotte wanted her co-author to recognise the irreversible damage she had done the hero's reputation in her responsive piece, 'The Green Dwarf'.[103] Written mere months after 'The Pirate', Charlotte imagines a romantic tale in which a little known Angrian heroine, Lady Emily Charlesworth, is caught in a love-triangle between her true love, an artist named Leslie, and the unwanted but belligerent suitor, Colonel Alexander Percy. Removing Branwell's 'Rougue' moniker from Percy, Charlotte re-establishes him to his land-based activities such as Roman-style chariot racing and duelling. Nevertheless, Percy has not entirely reverted to his former chivalric character; instead Charlotte makes him a parody of himself. When we are reintroduced to Percy at the African Olympic Games, his formerly undeniable handsomeness has diminished, although the character is still somewhat attractive 'his features were regularly formed and his forehead was lofty' (41). He appears to have been tainted somewhat by his time with Branwell, his eyes 'blue and sparkling' yet

[102] Neufeldt, 'Branwell Brontë's Alexander Rougue/Percy', p.195.
[103] Charlotte Brontë, *The Green Dwarf* (1833-34) (London: Hesperus, 2003). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

'sinister' (41). In fact, every asset which once added to his heroic image now bears the remnants of a darker edge: 'the smile that ever played round his deceitful looking mouth a spirit of deep restless villainy […] his pallid cheeks and somewhat haggard air bespoke at once the profligate and gambler and the Drunkard' (41). Her entire narrative sporadically preaches the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption, undoubtedly a stab at Rougue's excessive brandy-drinking. Another of Branwell's favoured characters, Captain Bud, has also seen better days as a result of drink: 'I was once a gallant youth […] Good liquour [sic.] and good living change a man surely.' (43) Charlotte was attempting to show Branwell it was not the degenerative traits bestowed on Rougue which made a genius, but talent and effort. Due to Branwell's bad influence, Northangerland no longer has those skills which made him a famous hero: he loses his chariot race in humiliating fashion and, in a piece of provoking prose most likely aimed at Branwell, those who witness it state that: 'the Colonel in my opinion has no reason to be ashamed by his defeat' as he was faced against such a 'consummate master' (46). Showboating, in Charlotte's opinion, is no substitute for effort.

Equally, William Michael Rossetti would not allow his brother to surrender entirely into a new artistic life without first understanding the sacrifices his family had made. William Michael questioned whether his brother understood the professional and familial hopes he was undertaking; understandably when we consider the sacrifices William Michael was forced to undergo for the sake of his brother's career. Although he 'may have preferred (and I certainly did prefer) to be doing literary work'[104], William seemed to have been resigned from an early age that this would not be the case.[105] As Gabriele's health declined and the family income dwindled further, William accepted those 'circumstances had dictated my

[104] William Michael Rossetti , *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.281.

[105] William's earliest 'fancy' was to join the navy, but as he grew out of the fantasies of boyhood he decided upon the medical profession. Nevertheless, his intentions were to always maintain connections to all those 'associations had to do with intellectual matters, literary and artistic.' (William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, with a Memoir,* Vol.1 p.116.)

entry into a Government office'[106]. One cannot help but consider the injustice William must have felt at Dante being relieved of all the financial duties of a first-born son, in a living that 'had not been in the least my wish'[107] at the Inland Revenue. Genius, as William Holman Hunt would argue, 'claims cultivation, and this cultivation W. M. Rossetti forewent by consideration of circumstances that his brother might have the better opportunity.'[108] It was not that Dante Gabriel's creativity was supported which infuriated William, but his brother's treatment of these blessings. Anne Clark Amor summarises how frustrating Dante Gabriel's recusing from the duties of first-born must have been for the entire family, who were working tirelessly to fund his dreams: 'far from contributing to the family income, was a drain on the resources of the others, for he went to Sass's Academy, where he trained for admission to the Royal Academy Schools'.[109] Hence, Dante Gabriel's letter-campaign which secured his "apprenticeship" with Madox Brown when he might have advanced through the Royal Academy must have felt an example of ingratitude for all the sacrifices he and the rest of the family had family for not remaining in the Royal Academy to complete his training. William Michael's vexation is evident as he describes how Dante Gabriel would most likely have obtained the appropriate tutors at the Royal Academy and 'all the training that he could want'.[110] In spite of hindsight allowing him to know of Dante Gabriel's success, William's tone is disapproving, implying some lingering resentment for having paid for Dante Gabriel's schooling, to his own detriment; when he 'had not yet lasted two years.'[111] To make matters worse, through the success of these tutorials, Dante Gabriel attracted enough attention to construct a new Brotherhood. Although William Michael was a vital member of this fraternity, not only was his brother forsaking his efforts to help his career, but was forging new brotherly connections amongst his Pre-Raphaelite Brethren.

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[106] William Michael Rossetti , *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2. p.281.
[107] Ibid.
[108] William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 2. Vols.* Vol. 1. (London: Macmillan, 1905), p.421.
[109] Anne Clarke Amor, *William Holman Hunt: The True Pre-Raphaelite* (London: Constable, 1989), p.35.
[110] William Michael Rossetti , *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2. p.281.
[111] Ibid.

Figure 7. Theodor Von Holst, 'The Wish' (Holst Birthplace Museum, 1840)

Nevertheless, Dante Gabriel's poems of this decisive period do suggest he did understand the gravitas of their situation. William Michael need only turn to his formative 1848 poem 'The Card-Dealer'[112], to discover how conscious Dante Gabriel was. This poem is inspired by yet another artistic hero who would shape the "D.G.R." persona: Theodor von Holst. Amongst the favoured artists which decorated the Pre-Raphaelite clubhouse[113], Holst was a student of Henry Fuseli – creator of 'The Nightmare (1781)' – and 'greatly addicted to supernatural subjects, which he treated with imaginative impulse and considerable pictorial skill.'[114] William Michael understood the influence Holst had upon his brother's work and the personal connection Dante Gabriel imagined he and Holst possessed. Dante Gabriel recalls how an engraving of 'that great painter' Von Holst and some select works of Ford Madox Brown were the 'sole pictorial adornment of my room.'[115] Although he does not specify which of Holst's portraits hung on the teenage Rossetti's walls, we do know that it was his alluring painting 'The Wish' which was exhibited in the P.R.B. clubhouse. [Fig.7.] This portrait

[112] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Poems* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1912), pp.95-96. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[113] Please refer to Richard Moss, 'Theodor Von Holst and the Pre-Raphaelites at Holst Birthplace Museum', *Culture24,* 2010 [accessed 21 June 2016]/
[114] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, p.117.
[115] Ibid.

depicts what John Francis refers to as 'a beautiful woman, richly dressed, who is sitting at a lamp-lit table, dealing out cards, with a peculiar fixedness of expression'.[116] This raven-haired fortune teller gazes directly at the onlooker, her eyes shaded black and her chin turned down to create a sense of scrutiny intended to intimidate the onlooker. The ethereal glow from her white gown draws attention to the playing cards she shuffles, the luminosity from the cards emphasises the sense of fate they dispense. Her confident posture and loose hair exhibit the dominance of a *femme fatale,* while the title 'The Wish' implies this gypsy-woman has been asked a question by the onlooker, who is yearning for her to transform the playing cards into a tarot deck – a desire undoubtedly encouraged by the painting's alternative title 'The Fortune-Teller' – so that she may predict the outcome, and yet she looks down as if she already knows the answer. It is revealing that Dante Gabriel was so drawn to this depiction at a crossroads of his career that he completed a piece of notional ekphrasis to accompany it. Written while Dante Gabriel was at the decisive moment when he would begin the Pre-Raphaelite venture, his language represents the diffidence which comes at such a crossroads. Intrigued by the power of this omniscient woman, Dante Gabriel attempts to understand her powers by making her the subject of his poem, observing how she draws in her fictitious male clientele, so that he may recreate her influence through his own depictions of women.

His speaker inserts himself within the masses who ask her to foresee their fate, declaring 'she and we' (l.29) play together. Holst's muse becomes a fateful decider of the merit of men, describing the omniscient dealer's mind as a place where 'who lieth down ariseth not.' (l.33) The woman had the power to make or break the male onlooker, as Rossetti tells the audience directly: 'you ask what game she plays? | With me 'tis lost or won', reflecting Dante's personal definition of ambition as 'the feeling of pure rage and self-hatred when

[116] John Francis, Ed. *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts for the Year* (1852) (London: Printed by James Holmes, 1852), p.1147.

anyone else does better than you do'.[117] To be less than the best, for Rossetti, is complete failure. Consequently, this unestablished artist turns to the imagined mystic and asks for reassurance in his own future, as he desires for her to bestow her own powers upon him. He writes of Holst's seer as both subject and poet, her observant nature enabling her to manipulate images as her discerning 'eyes (to) unravel the coiled night' (l.5) and 'know the stars at noon' (l.6). His "wish", therefore, is that the muse may bestow equal fortune in his own imagination, as he becomes another powerless man searching for 'rich dreams that wreathe her brows' (ll.9-10) for the methodology to create 'smooth polished things' (l.20). However, there is vulnerability beyond that of an up-and-coming artist, as the narrator addresses the reader with the mentality not of a desperate artist but the language of a child. The narrator addresses the reader stating that the card-dealer plays 'with thee' (l.25), the imagery of games intimates the dealer's indifference, but also how she 'toys' with men. Yet the regular repetition of 'play' implies that Dante Gabriel has come to a juncture between the 'play' of childhood and the professional realm: expressing how he and the woman 'play together […] Within a vain strange land' (ll.29-30). We must note that in 1848, Dante Gabriel was also in the midst of a game of *bouts-rimés* with his brother William, reluctant to fully relinquish the safety of his childhood, when artistic recognition was seemingly a fantasy. Consequently, the card game adopts a dual meaning. Consider how Dante Gabriel writes of playing cards as if they were tarot cards. Card games played an important role in familial harmony: Roe reminds us that if writing and *bouts-rimés* sessions grew too competitive, Frances Rossetti would encourage her children to play card-games.[118] Still, competition was innate amongst the Rossetti children, each selecting an individual suit to increase the stakes. Dante selected hearts, prophesying the lothario-image he would forge for himself; Christina the diamonds, whose 'fiery' depictions, Marsh explains, 'Christina claimed an appropriate

[117] Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Mr. Smetham, dated 1865, *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1, p.422.
[118] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.10.

emblem for her juvenile self'[119]; while William and Maria were left with the "unexciting" suits of spades and clubs, respectively. The unknown kingdom of the art world is envisioned in 'The Card-Dealer' through nostalgic eyes, recalling a simpler time when one's only competition was one's sibling. Dante yearns for a card-game to alleviate the competition and pressure, as he and his siblings did in his childhood. The interchangeability of fate-predicting cards and simple card tricks implies the young artist understood the significance of his childhood practices in the formation of his career, while the distressed tone and tentative syntax of the poem demonstrates his understanding of his family's expectations. We, subsequently, are put in mind of the definitive statement Dante Gabriel inserted into 'The Blood's Winter': 'I fail and so the end is come'.

Both Branwell and Dante Gabriel sought to create what Barker declares 'a career which appealed to all the family's passion for the glamourous world of the arts'[120], yet in doing so they risked losing their original authorial selves which flourished amongst familial collaboration. This paradoxical shift in the sibling dynamic would be a source of contention throughout the siblings' careers – especially for the Brontë and Rossetti sisters who watched their once co-author brothers transform into the stereotypically "masculine" artist.

[119] Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012), p.46.
[120] Barker, Ed., *Life in Letters,* p.32.

Unpleasant and Undreamt: Sisterly Deconstructions of the Brother's "Second-Self"

The models of artistic masculinity Branwell and Dante Gabriel used to reinvent themselves also redefined their dynamic with their female former co-authors. This was a result of a lack of brotherly conduct, as well as how they came to evaluate the "worth" of women. Both Branwell and Dante Gabriel marketed themselves as contemporary incarnations of lovelorn poets; consequently they required an *inamorata* worthy of the Romantic "Beloved". Ideally these women would be both within and without the poet's influence, a muse for their art yet unattainable by financial and/or familial obstacles or even death. The sensualised muse became an extension of the man's artistic persona, the inspiration which fed his work. For Branwell, this was Mrs. Robinson, the wife of his former employer. Dante Gabriel became involved in many affairs with various muses, such as Fannie Cornforth and one relationship that 'attained legendary status'[121] with his colleague William Morris's wife, Jane. However, this chapter will focus on Dante Gabriel's most famous muse whose work as a model began in the establishing days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Siddal. We must not assume the Brontë and Rossetti sisters were exempt from these sensualised re-imaginings of womanhood as both Anne Brontë and Christina Rossetti openly reprimanded their brothers for how they would sexualise their professional space.

The Brontë sisters' distaste for the teaching profession, as previously discussed in Chapter Three, led them to believe themselves "escapees" whenever they were recused from their post. During Anne Brontë's stay at Thorp Green (1841-45), she experienced the health-altering homesickness which afflicted both her sisters during teaching posts which is recorded in her poem titled 'Lines Written at Thorp Green': 'Far sweeter is the winter bare, |

[121] Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women: Images of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p.58.

With long, dark nights, and landscape drear, | To them that are at Home!'[122] Consequently, once she resigned from this position, Anne wrote in her 31st July 1845 diary paper that she had 'escaped' at last.[123] Unfortunately, Anne's removal from Thorp Green was far less voluntary than her diary implies as her career was in fact the "collateral damage" of Branwell's recklessness. After returning to the parsonage after yet another failed professional venture – having been dismissed from his post as a railroad clerk in Luddenden Foot after being accused of embezzlement[124] – his spirits were alarmingly low. Branwell wrote to his friend Francis Grundy in 1842 that he suffered with 'extreme pain and illness, with mental depression worse than either' after his return home, congratulating himself once he could 'speak cheerfully and enjoy the company of another without the stimulus of six glasses of whiskey.'[125] Even the sanctuary of his father's library held no interest for him, lamenting that he had 'no one to speak to except crabbed old Greeks and Romans'[126], a far-cry from the enthusiastic Branwell of Anne's childhood. Anne empathised with her brother and potentially also wished to help relieve her father of having to care and support Branwell, and subsequently took him with her to Thorp Green in the summer of 1843 to work as a tutor to Master Edmund Robinson. At first, it seemed Branwell would rise to the challenge and be a good enough brother to Anne to ensure they would both keep their posts. Nick Holland writes, '[h]e has quelled his normal pride and exuberance when dealing with Mr. Robinson […] Things were progressing just as Anne had hoped.'[127] Regrettably, both he and Anne's financial security was disrupted when Branwell engaged in a romance with their

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[122] Anne Brontë, 'Lines Written at Thorp Green (1846)' in *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings*, Ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) (84-85), p.85, ll.22-24.

[123] Anne Brontë Diary Paper, 31st July 1845, *Life in Letters,* (132-133), p.132.

[124] Although Branwell found the profession uninspiring - writing about his 'determination to find out how far the mind could carry the body without both being chucked into Hell […] and seeking relief from the indulgence of feelings' (Branwell Brontë letter to Francis Grundy, dated 22nd May 1842, *Life in Letters,* p.104) – the defamation of his character seemed to have triggered a state of depression in Branwell.

[125] Branwell Brontë letter to Francis Grundy, dated 22nd May 1842, *Life in Letters* (103-105), pp.103-104.

[126] Ibid, p.104.

[127] Nick Holland, *In Search of Anne Brontë* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016), p.144.

employer's wife until, as John Sutherland asserts, 'Branwell's misdoings made further staying impossible, and she resigned her post.'[128]

Beyond the sheer lack of common-sense in Branwell, Anne must also have been understandably frustrated with her brother's lack of gratitude[129] - we must wonder if he understood the tremendous risk Anne took in recommending Branwell for the tutor position in the first instance, as he had not long been dismissed from his position as a railroad clerk for supposed embezzlement. Anne took a chance that Branwell would rise to the occasion, instead he found the "ideal" sensationalised woman to match his 'Northangerland' persona: Mrs Lydia Robinson. The beginning of the end of Branwell and Anne's teaching career was signalled in Branwell's letter to John Brown in 1843, describing how his 'pretty' mistress of 'about 37 with a darkish skin & bright glancing eyes' is 'DAMNABLY TOO FOND OF ME'.[130] Within a matter of months, Branwell transformed himself into an "irresistible" Byronic hero and the untouchable Robinson into his own Gulnare, describing her as one would a wealthy, Byronic woman: 'For four years […] a Lady intensely loved me as I did her […] wish for in a woman, and vastly above me in rank, and she loved me even better than I did her'.[131] When Branwell returned to Haworth in 1845, supposedly for a "vacation" he 'received a furious

[128] John Sutherland, *The Brontësaurus: An A-Z of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë (and Branwell)* (London: Icon Books, Ltd., 2016), p.28.

[129] There is an argument to be made that Anne was also exasperated with Branwell's "lovelorn" self-pity due to her own experience with lost love. There is continuing speculation amongst critics that Anne Brontë had a romantic relationship wither father's curate William Weightman after he came to Haworth in 1839. Charlotte Brontë certainly suggests there was a flirtation between the two in a letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 20th January 1842: 'He sits opposite Anne at church sighing softly and looking out of the corners of his eyes to win her attention - and Anne is so quiet, her look so downcast - they are a picture…' in Barker, *The Brontës,* p.366. Unfortunately, Anne was working away at Thorp Green when he passed away from cholera, 6th September 1842. There is speculation about whether Weightman is the influence for love interest Mr. Weston in *Agnes Grey,* and if many of Anne's more melancholic poems during this period reflect heartbreak at the loss of the young man. [For further reading of various critical and biographical opinions please refer to Marianne Thormählen's 'Anne Brontë's Sacred Harmony: A Discovery', *Brontë Studies*, Volume 30, Issue 2 (2005) (93-102), p.98. If the story of Anne's heartbreak is true, we can comprehend her impatience with Branwell – her first love had passed away prematurely, but Anne wrote cathartically through the pain, however Branwell was creatively stifled and physically catatonic at the loss of a woman he knew he could never marry.

[130] Branwell Brontë letter to John Brown, dated May 1843 in *Life in Letters* (114-115), p.114.

[131] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)

letter from my Employer threatening to shoot me if I returned'.[132] Consequently, Branwell descended into the self-pity of a heartbroken Romantic: 'now what is the result of these four years? UTTER WRECK.'[133]

Having discovered his Beloved, Branwell immersed himself into this juvenile persona, as Samantha Ellis observes: 'He'd been signing his poems with an old Angrian pseudonym […] Thorp Green was just about grand enough to be the setting for one of Northangerland's sexual conquests.'[134] This, naturally, made Robinson, Ellis continues: 'one of Angria's aristocratic, languishing flirts.'[135] Once this affair was eventually exposed, Branwell did seem to retrieve some of his former creativity; writing to his friend J.B. Leyland that he had begun 'the composition of a three volume Novel [sic.].'[136] Out of context, this letter would seem to be the result the Brontë family had wished for – Branwell apparently achieving his full potential – instead, this letter is one of a tormented man attempting to process 'misery' by fictionalising it, transforming Mrs. Robinson into the unattainable heroine. Moreover, he claimed her as irrevocably *his*, the one 'whom I must, till death, call my wife. [sic.]'[137]

This three-volume novel would later be burned by Charlotte following Branwell's death[138] due to its public condemnation of the Robinson family, as John Sutherland explains; the novel chronicled 'a fall like Lucifer's, precipitated, like Adam's *felix culpa,* by a woman and a serpent. The name of the villainess? Mrs Robinson.'[139] The work not only laments the

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[132] Branwell Brontë, letter to Francis Henry Grundy, c.1848, [Letter 23], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/23 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[133] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)
[134] Samantha Ellis, *Take Courage: Anne Brontë and the Art of Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2017), p.194.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Branwell Brontë letter to J.B. Leyland, dated 10th September 1845, *Life in Letters,* p.135.
[137] Branwell Brontë, letter to Francis Henry Grundy, c.1848, [Letter 23], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/23 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[138] As will be noted in Chapter Five of this thesis.
[139] Sutherland, *The Brontësaurus,* p.22.

suffering of himself and Mrs. Robinson – who Branwell imagined to have fallen like Eve into 'religious melancholy' believing that 'her weight of sorrow is Gods punishment, and hopelessly resigns herself to her doom'[140] – but castigates her family who forbade their relationship as 'powerful persons who hate me like Hell.'[141] We can discern from Branwell's correspondence that he did not intend to conceal anything within this work which promised to unravel the 'deceit which must enwrap man and woman'.[142] Branwell was not known for his discretion during this period, which has led many biographers and dramatists to speculate as to how much 'the whispers that passed between'[143] Anne witnessed. Certainly if Branwell struggled to contain the details with her as he did in his letters to his friends, as Ellis contemplates, '[m]aybe Anne found one of Branwell's love poems. Or maybe Branwell just told her – he was so indiscreet that he sent a friend a lock of Mrs Robinson's hair.'[144] Such conjectures have been motivated by, not only Anne's proximity to the affair, but a rare reference in her diary papers to this incident: 'I have had some very unpleasant and undreamt of experience of human nature.'[145] The choice of the term 'experience' suggest that she had not simply heard of the episode but was forced to confront it, to live with the knowledge of it. Although she restrains from specifically decrying Branwell in her own diary, the cathartic journal of her *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* protagonist, Helen Huntingdon,

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As the manuscript no longer exists, we cannot verify if Branwell intended to change Mrs. Robinson's name should it have come to publication, however if he had no intention to conceal Mrs. Robinson's name, this is very telling of his mind set. He wanted to be as scandalous as his heroes, like Byron, for his relationships as well as his writing. Moreover, if he believed himself to be the lovelorn figure of Northangerland, as he would sign his poems and correspondences during this period, then Robinson, in her natural state, was the Beloved. As a result, it may not be that Branwell would not change Robinson's name, rather he could not understand why he should as she had practically amalgamated with the woman of his imagination – as this chapter will analyse.

[140] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).

[141] Ibid.

[142] Branwell Brontë letter to J.B Leyland, 10th September 1845, *Life in Letters,* p.135.

[143] Holland, *In Search of Brontë,* p.146.

[144] Ellis, *Take Courage,* p.194.

The "symbol" of this hair, and its significance in Branwell's self-deceit, will be analysed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

[145] Anne Brontë Diary Paper, 31st July 1845, *Life in Letters* (132-133), p.132.

contemplates the vices which Branwell personified: addiction, a lack of sexual restraint, and an absence of protective-instinct for the women in his life.

Similarly, Christina Rossetti struggled to consolidate the image of the Gabriel Charles of her youth who would encourage her poetry and consider herself and Maria equals, and the Pre-Raphaelite rake who reduced talented women to a voiceless "ideal". Romantic relationships had to be either intemperate or short-lived to be considered suitably Byronic, and Dante Gabriel would adhere to this benchmark once he "discovered" Elizabeth Siddal in a milliner's shop in 1850. She was such a frequent feature of the Pre-Raphaelite canvases that '[f]ew female figures of the nineteenth century have engaged the popular imagination as much,' Serena Trowbridge argues, 'Her face is very familiar; her rather short and sad life almost equally so.'[146] The love story of the Pre-Raphaelite founder and his favoured model was so widely talked about socially, in William Michael's *Some Reminiscences* he declares that the pair have been so vastly speculated about, '[i]t is not my intention to go over these matters here again in any detail'.[147] The impatience in his tone indicates the extent of the gossip which lived on decades after Siddal's death from laudanum-abuse, immortalised on the canvases of men. For Christina Rossetti, the male gaze Siddal and her stunner contemporaries were exposed to; juxtaposed with the sense of equality once evoked by their

[146] Serena Trowbridge, Ed. *My Lady's Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2018), p.8.
Siddal would attempt to develop her own career - she sought creative autonomy under the artistic and literary tutelage of Dante Gabriel. Eventually, her raw talent would attract the patronage of the highly-sought after critic John Ruskin himself, who believed Siddal to be an innate genius: 'Ruskin admired her much,' William Michael recalls, 'he took a most hearty interest and pleasure in the refinement and feeling displayed in her designs.' (William Michael Rossetti, *The Pre-Raphaelites and their World A Personal View. From Some Reminiscences and Other Writings of William Michael Rossetti.* (London: The Folio Society, 1995), p.115) Nevertheless, Siddal was valued 'for her status as muse, any recovery of her art and poetry is inevitably bound up with the ideology that both produced and silenced her work.' (Alison Chapman, *The Afterlife of Christina Rossetti* (New York: Macmillan, 2000), p.38).

[147] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.190.
William Michael's refusal to enable the gossip will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

brothers. Although Dante Gabriel would continue to support her work[148], Christina considered his carnal images of women such as Siddal to be a disservice to their entire gender. Understandably, there is a sense of frustration which arises from watching one's brother perpetuate the stereotype of the woman valued only for her beauty while one is attempting to prove the capability of women in the arts.[149]

Figure 8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Regina Cordium' (Johannesburg Art Gallery, c.1860)

Christina was exposed to the artist/model dynamic from the end of 1848, when her brothers, long aware of her literary ability, were determined to make her a member. Nevertheless, the rest of the fraternity seemed uncomfortable with this petition. Christina was not, as William Michael maintains, crowned 'Queen of the Pre-Raphaelites'[150], as later critics and fans

[148] As previously discussed in Chapter Three, and will be revisited in detail in Chapter Five.

[149] Christina Rossetti famously wrote from the nameless sitter's perspective with great empathy in her 1856 poem 'In an Artist's Studio'. This poem highlights how the misplaced trust of the model is abused by the objectifying painter: 'He feeds upon her face by day and night, | And she with true kind eyes look back on him.' (Christina Rossetti, 'In An Artist's Studio' in *Poetical Works* (p.330), ll.9-10.) The vampiric image emphasises that while the woman humours the artist, the man needs the woman for his work to flourish. Christina would not allow a woman with any creative capacity to be silenced as a rare, autonomous woman amongst the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. (For further reading please refer to Dinah Roe's 'In An Artist's Studio' [Three-Part Analysis], *Pre-Raphaelites in the City,* 2011 – please refer to 'Further Reading' Section in Bibliography).

[150] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331. (c.1906) (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.59.

claimed, explaining this title was a 'mere invention *après coup*'[151] by Christina's admirers. The fact she was the sole woman associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in the 'dawn' of its legacy seems to have fuelled this myth. However, William Michael continues to speak of Christina in terms of an 'incidental' Pre-Raphaelite, who was an 'acquaintance' of his fellow founding members, rather than an "honorary" fellow. Dante Gabriel had a solution to this problem. If his new community were reluctant to recruit a "sister", perhaps they would accept a "wife". While Branwell Brontë never imposed his sensualisation of women onto his sisters, Dante Gabriel essentially offered his youngest sister as a potential bride to his new brethren. Her Pre-Raphaelite initiation seemed hinged upon a marriage connection to one of the brothers, her role as a Rossetti sister evidently insufficient. The concept of incorporating the eligibility of female family members into one's own reputation was not unheard of in the Rossetti family - in Chapters One and Two, for instance, we considered how Frances played the ideal bride to Gabriele's Romantic expatriate image – however, by 1848 it was Christina who was being prepared to improve her own and James Collinson's Pre-Raphaelite image through marriage.[152] It is, however, intriguing that an avant-garde artist like Dante Gabriel would resort to such a traditional, patriarchal solution as "marry-off" his sister, although we have previously established the desire for dynasty shared by Gabriele and Dante Gabriel. The "brother" and the "Pre-Raphaelite Brother" merge in this act as William Michael confesses that Dante Gabriel, following Collinson's entreaty that he might recommend him to Christina, possessed 'perhaps too headlong a wish to serve the interest of a "Pre-Raphaelite Brother" […] advocated Collinson's cause.'[153] Suddenly, Dante Gabriel was exercising an elder son duty from which he had been pardoned: ensuring the security of his unmarried sister, although it was her artistic wellbeing he was safeguarding. The lines between private and public self were being blurred, and suddenly Christina's identity was equally complicated.

[151] Ibid.
[152] As Chapter Three of this study has already discussed the circumstances of Christina's betrothal to James Collinson, this chapter will not extensively reiterate the details.
[153] William Michael Rossetti, *Pre-Raphaelites and their World,* p.85.

Dante Gabriel was supporting the poetess by "peddling" her as a woman. As he encouraged her to surrender her individuality, gone, it seemed, was the brother who had once insisted that nothing should distract her or Maria from their chosen vocations.[154] Christina wanted her brother to know that, although he was accustomed to commoditising love and women, she was off-limits.

Christina Rossetti yearned for a time when her eldest brother was still just that, not her Pre-Raphaelite "superior" or James Collinson's envoy. Consequently, in the 1850-60s she would return to those renowned 1848 poems, written when Dante Gabriel was on the cusp of renown. She began with his formative work 'The Card-Dealer'. Although Dante Gabriel would originally approach this theme with the tentativeness of a novice, in 1860 Dante Gabriel once again paired this concept of *femme fatale* and play in his decadent portrait 'Regina Cordium'. [Fig.8.] Now a firm fixture of the art-scene, with his Beloved Lizzie as the model, Dante Gabriel not only returned to Holst's idea of card-dealing, he depicts his own muse, not as the card dealer, but the card itself. The portrait depicts Lizzie in the role of the imperious queen in a royal suit, her image flat against the glittering backdrop like a printed playing card. Her famous auburn hair is loose, a pansy is displayed in her right hand and a noose-like red cord is wrapped around her neck in a disturbing display of bondage, despite her regal pose. Literally playing his muse like a card, Dante Gabriel proves himself in possession of the winning hand with his sought-after Lizzie, declaring his victory as a painter. This was a far-cry from the anxious poet of 'The Card-Dealer', but Christina still presents herself as a worthy opponent against his chauvinistic actions in her poem 'The Queen of Hearts'.[155] Stripping his painting's title of its delusions of grandeur, Christina wrote her rebuttal rhyme six years after the picture's completion, seeming to mock each aspect of its composition. The poem depicts a card playing narrator, believing herself to have been

[154] Please refer to his letters to Frances in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[155] Christina Rossetti, *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), p.353. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

confronted by an unfairly advantaged challenger. The speaker believes she has been dealt a card short, arguing there 'should be one card more' (l.15). We have established how Dante Gabriel's charm and opportunities made him pre-disposed to success, whereas Christina's gender and lack of networking prospects meant she struggled to maintain the same public presence as her brother, always seeming 'short' of a full-house. The clearest indication that Christina was envisioning her brother in this rival's role, in addition to the title, is the opponent's ability to manipulate the titular queen to their will. Addressing her adversary as 'Flora' (l.1), the Classical goddess of flowers, the narrator despairs that: 'However the pack parts | you invariably […] still hold the Queen of Hearts.' (l.3-4) The name 'Flora', conceivably, is a disparagement of the pansy in her brother's painting of the same name. While one is tempted to join in the joke, there is a potentially much darker interpretation of this choice of name as Flora, in Greek Mythology, was originally Chloris, a spring nymph who was abducted by Zephyrus, god of the west wind, and transformed into the deity Flora. This Classical figure was claimed by a man, much like the captive queen of 'Regina Cordium', and reinvented as an unattainable idol, in the same way, Christina believed, Dante Gabriel had with Lizzie. The duplicity of her challenger, however, is apparent only to the speaker who accuses her adversary of 'prepense' (l.13) as well as having 'deceived me' (l.20), yet the Queen still remains in his hand: 'the Queen still falls to you.' (l.32). Intriguingly, Christina does not depict her opponent as having 'stolen' the card, instead the queen submissively 'falls' to him, mirroring the stereotypical image of a swooning Victorian lady and the act of 'falling' in love, an "occupational hazard" for many of Dante's models. This creates a sense of exasperation towards a man who can charm his way through life, openly mocking the inquisitive language of Dante Gabriel's 'The Card-Dealer' and his study of the eponymous woman's gaze: 'I've scanned you with a scrutinising gaze, | Resolved to fathom these your secret ways' (ll.5-6), yet his skills remain a frustrating mystery to her. If she cannot understand the extent of her fellow player's luck, she will make her own as the narrator assumes the role of Dante Gabriel's omnipotent card-dealer, echoing her continuous

shuffling of cards: 'I cut and shuffle, shuffle, cut' (l.9). She is determined to change her fate and create an even playing field. Despite Dante Gabriel's best efforts to continually support Christina's work[156], her respect for her brother diminished as the engagement to Collinson ended. Subsequently her reliance on William Michael, the brother who had never exploited her or any woman for his career, only grew. He became a crutch for Christina as Collinson distanced himself from her, writing: 'I wish you would find out whether Mr. Collinson is as delicate as he used to be: you and Gabriel are my resources, and you are by far the more agreeable.'[157] William Michael respected Christina as a poet and a sister, and frequently defended her precarious place amongst the Brothers.[158] However, if Dante Gabriel would take his childhood playmate and "sell" her as another artist's inspiration, Christina would take his art and reconstruct it into a depiction of glorified "play" and show where he was lacking in brotherly duty.

If a rakish writer was determined to make a spectacle of himself, then he must be chastised in an equally public forum. Consequently, the writings of Anne and Christina would target their brothers' carefully tailored "second-selves". Although their fiction would censure Branwell and Dante Gabriel's actions directly, Anne and Christina also asked their brothers to recognise how they were affecting the women around them through their long-suffering female characters. It was a method utilised by Harriet Beecher Stowe to rebuke the rakish persona of one of Branwell and Dante Gabriel's heroes, Byron himself. In her 1870 biography *Lady Byron Vindicated*, she implores her readers to look beyond the intrigue of the celebrity and recognise the destruction Byron's degenerate ways caused, especially for his long-suffering wife Lady Anne Isabella "Annabella" Byron. In her marriage, Lady Byron was

[156] As previously discussed in Chapter Three, and will be revisited in Chapter Five.
[157] Christina Rossetti to William Michael Rossetti, letter dated 8th August 1850, *The Family Letters of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, p.36.
[158] See William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906)p.159.

required 'to receive wandering prodigals'[159] into her home, similarly Anne's Helen Huntingdon is forced to accept 'a set of loose, profligate young men' who claim to be her husband's friends, but 'whose chief delight is to wallow in vice, and vie with each other who can run fastest and furthest down the headlong road to the place prepared for the devil and his angels.'[160] Intriguingly, Beecher Stowe's portrayal of the Byrons' marriage is exceptionally similar to Anne Brontë's depiction of the Huntingdons' dynamic in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). *Lady Byron Vindicated* utilises hopes that his beloved Annabella would "rescue" him from the corruption of his poetic persona, dwelling 'on her virtues with a sort of pride of ownership […] acting the part of the successful fiancé'.[161] Beecher Stowe implores her audience to recognise that Byron's flaws were his own, and not for his wife to redeem, citing Harriet Martineau's observation that '[a]t the altar she did not know that she was a sacrifice'.[162] Anne's Arthur Huntingdon echoes Byron's supposed approach to his marriage, pursuing his future-wife Helen as if courting absolution: 'she is an angel, and I am a presumptuous dog to dream of possessing such a treasure […] as for her happiness, I would sacrifice my body and soul-' (273). Regardless of multiple admonitions, Marianne Thormählen observes Helen's infatuation has convinced her that Huntingdon can be "saved". Much like Beecher Stowe's depiction of Lady Byron, Helen offers herself as Huntingdon's salvation, but 'the bride Helen's attempts to persuade herself that her marriage can be saved give way to anger and misery'.[163] 'I want to warn you,' Helen's aunt insists, 'not to suffer your heart to be stolen from you by the first foolish or unprincipled person who covets the possession of it.' (208) Unfortunately, Helen disregards her advice. Moreover, when her Aunt insists that Huntingdon is heading 'to the place prepared for the devil', Helen

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[159] Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lady Byron Vindicated*: A History of the Byron Controversy, from Its Beginning in 1816 to the Present Time* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870)*,* p.429.

[160] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Darlington: J.M. Dent, 1893), p.241. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

[161] Beecher Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p.429.

[162] Harriet Martineau cited in Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated: A History of the Byron Controversy, from Its Beginning in 1816 to the Present Time* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870), p.430.

[163] Marianne Thormählen, 'Standing Alone: Anne Brontë out of the Shadow', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.39, Issue.4 (2014) (330-40), p.337.

optimistically responds, 'Then I will save him from them. […] 'I shall consider my life well spent in saving him from the consequences of his early errors.' (242) Helen's aunt blames her for entertaining Huntingdon's seductions, not solely because she did not heed her counsel, but because *she* is too great a temptation: 'you have a fair share of beauty, besides - and I hope you may never have cause to regret it!' (209) It takes many years of tolerating Huntingdon's torments and what Meghan Bullock dubs 'a look into the lives of different women and their relationships, their motivations, and the abuses they suffer'[164], but Helen learns, not only that she cannot "save" Huntingdon, but that he must save himself: 'No, never, never, never! He may drink himself dead, but it is *not* my fault!' (312) This novel is ultimately a cautionary text warning women against the charms of undeserving men, but also explores the themes of blame and freewill in destructive relationships.

Maggie Berg compares Huntingdon's subsequent pursuit of Helen to that of an aristocrat hunting an animal, seeking a trophy in order to gain an objective 'sense of their masculinity'.[165] Even his name "Hunting-don" emphasises his status as a man who enjoys the game above the prize. As such, Helen is a "masculine" triumph, valued only by the worth she gives men – much like the artistic "beloveds" Branwell and Dante Gabriel were in search of. Berg notes how Anne stresses the theme of "the chase", observing that his attempts at courting take place 'entirely during shooting parties'.[166] Moreover, when he attempts to incite a reaction out of her by threatening to destroy the contents, or the 'bowels' (258), of her art portfolio, he loses interest in vexing her and simply states: 'Humph! I'll go and shoot now.' Berg summarises this scene as a petulant child growing tired of one game, and leaving

[164] Meghan Bullock, 'Abuse, Silence, and Solitude in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', *Brontë Studies*, Vol.29, Issue. 2, (2004) (135-141), p.135.
[165] Maggie Berg, '"Let me have its bowels then": Violence, Sacrificial Structure, and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', *Literature Interpretation Theory,* Vol.21, Issue.1 (2010) (20-40), p.21
[166] Berg, '"Let me have its bowels then": Violence, Sacrificial Structure, and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', p.27

in search of another.[167] Furthermore, Huntingdon blames Helen for his continuously bad behaviour: 'you are an angel of heaven; only be not too austere in your divinity, and remember that I am a poor, fallible mortal.' (322) The bitter irony of this assertion is, in admitting he is human, Huntingdon is conceding that he possesses freewill – only he can change his ways. Many critics have speculated that Huntingdon, with his compulsive personality, search for a redemptive Beloved, and penchant for seducing other men's wives, is based on Branwell's time at Thorp Green, and consequential addictions, with Francis Leyland arguing: 'in Arthur Huntingdon, we have "a picture" and a "portrait" of Branwell Brontë. […] were he not like Huntingdon, [Anne] could not have libelled him so.'[168] However, we can see from these parallels between Helen's marriage and Lady Byron's that Huntingdon was not based entirely on Anne's brother, rather he embodies the darker side of the Byronic myth he wished to emulate – in order words: the new Northangerland.

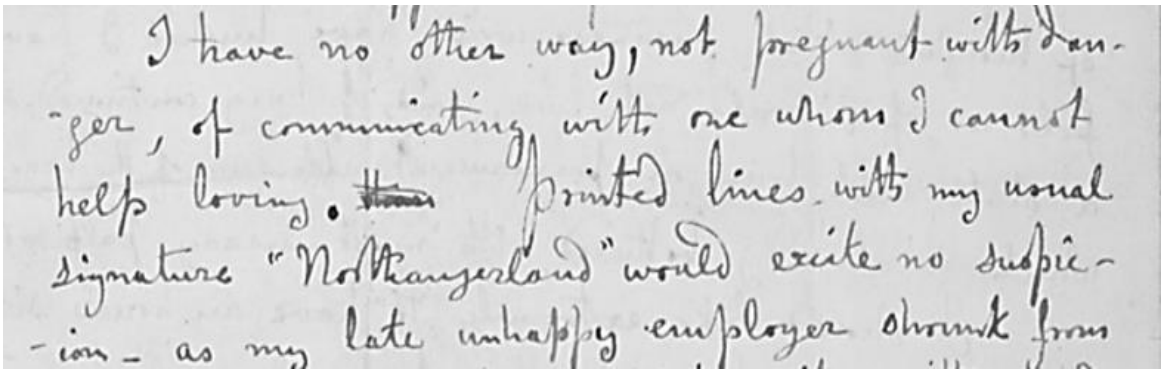
I have no other way, not pregnant with dan-
-ger, of communicating with one whom I cannot
help loving. ~~them~~ printed lines with my usual
signature "Northangerland" would excite no suspic-
-ion – as my late unhappy employer shrunk from

Figure 9. Branwell Bronte letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 25th November 1845. [Letter 9], MS.19c Bronte/02/01/09 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)

The words of Branwell's literary hero were irrevocably tied to Mrs. Robinson, as he quotes 'Byron's terribly truthful words' in a letter to Joseph Leyland following his separation from his "paramour":

> No more, no more, oh! never more on me

[167] Ibid, p.28.
[168] Francis A. Leyland, *The Brontë Family, With Special Reference to Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Vol.II (1886) (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1971), p.217.

The freshness of the heart shall fall like dew,

Which, out of all the lovely things we see

Extracts emotions beautiful and new![169]

He continues to explain to Leyland that the literary ideas which 'used to come clothed in sunlight' are dressed in 'funeral black' – the choice colour of Byron and Northangerland.[170] After years of wishing he could assimilate himself with a Byronic hero, Branwell now struggled to distinguish fact from fiction. During his banishment from Thorp Green, Branwell would desperately attempt to remain in contact with Mrs. Robinson and to avoid being caught by her husband he would sign the letters 'Northangerland': 'I have no other way, not pregnant with danger, of communicating with one whom I cannot help loving. Printed lines with my usual signature "Northangerland" could excite no suspicion'.[171] [Fig.9.] When it became evident that he and Mrs. Robinson would never be reunited, Branwell fell into a depression reminiscent of Northangerland following the death of Mary Percy, also consuming laudanum and alcohol to drown his sorrows. Branwell, J.M.S Tompkins maintains, had become a ghost of his former self: 'the incarnation of trivialities […] a thing of intellectual rags and patches, an object of amused contempt.'[172] His former co-author believed his behaviour to be merely an excuse for a lack of effort, having abandoned his supposed three-volume novel in his final years: 'Branwell, declares now that he neither can nor will do anything for himself – good situations have been offered more than once […] but he will do nothing – except drink, and make us all wretched –'[173] Branwell believed himself entitled to his unproductive misery, as none of these events were his or his Beloved's fault – or so he argued – depicting Mrs. Robinson as a woman tormented by her husband, who naturally had

[169] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[170] Ibid.
[171] Branwell Bronte letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 25th November 1845. [Letter 9], MS.19c Bronte/02/01/09 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[172] Tompkins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold', p.253.
[173] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 17th June 1846, *Life in Letters,* (148-149), p.148.

an affair in response to the 'heartless and unmanly manner in which she was treated by an eunuch like fellow who though possessed of such a treasure'.[174]

During their time at Thorp Green and beyond, Ellis maintains, 'Anne could see that Branwell's dreams of Byron were destroying him.'[175] Branwell, Huntingdon and Northangerland all descended into alcoholic, emotionally lost men in search of "the" woman who would save them, and all of them were inspired by Byron. Anne feared that Branwell was attempting to imitate Byron's reputation as 'a roaring, aristocratic, philandering drunk, wreaking havoc across the fleshpots of Europe'[176], much as Helen comes to fear that Huntingdon is transforming their son, also named Arthur into his profligate prodigy. Gwen Hyman declares the entirety of Huntingdon's fatherhood as 'teach[ing] his toddler son to drink and swear'.[177] It is this education in dissolution that causes Helen to run away in search of a 'smoother and safer passage' (36) for her son's life.[178] It is not too late to correct her son's vices, but Helen cannot save her husband – nor should she have to. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* argues that man should not expect a woman to fix him, as Ellis stresses: 'Anne doesn't blame anyone else for Huntingdon's bad behaviour'[179], just as she did not reproach anyone else for Branwell's waywardness.

In a similar fashion to Anne's deconstruction of her brother's destructive Byronism, Christina Rossetti was prepared to challenge the 'D.G.R.' brand. She had already returned to his early work 'The Card-Dealer' to correct his image of the fetishized *femme fatale,* however her next objective was the magnum opus of his juvenilia: 'The Blessed Damozel'. As aforementioned

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[174] Branwell Brontë, letter to Francis Henry Grundy, c.1848, [Letter 23], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/23 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)
[175] Ellis, *Take Courage,* p.204.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Gwen Hyman, '"An Infernal Fire in My Veins": Gentlemanly Drinking in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* Vol.36 (2008) (451-469), p.451.
[178] Helen's overprotectiveness over her son leads to her love interest, Gilbert Markham, also questioning the role of freewill, asking if it is preferable to have 'the circumstance of being able and willing to resist temptation; or that of having no temptation to resist?' (35)
[179] Ellis, *Take Courage,* p.208.

in this chapter, the "beloved" of the poem has died however, instead of being written from the point of view of her elegiac lover, the woman yearns to reunite with him on earth: 'The blessed damozel leaned out | From the gold bar of Heaven'. [180] We cannot help but recall Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Cathy's sentiment that she would rather be on earth with Heathcliff than in heaven[181] as the eponymous Damozel describes how she is safe within 'the rampart of God's home' (l.25), and yet 'still she bowed herself and stooped | Out of the circling charm' (ll.43-44), until she can behold the sight of her lover on earth. A golden bar divides her from earth (l.26) – embodied in the poem's accompanying painting by the frame – simultaneously emphasising the beauty of her ethereal "prison"; nevertheless, 'her gaze still strove' (l.51) to see her lover on earth. She is depicted as the epitome of virginal beauty, with fair hair 'that lay along her back […] yellow like corn' (ll.11-12), and surrounded by white images such as 'lilies' (l.5) and 'white roses' (l.9), a posthumous bridal bouquet as she awaits her lover to join her in heaven so they might be together forever, 'to live as once on earth' (l.129). This woman is beautiful, unattainable and devoted, the ideal "beloved" to Dante Gabriel. However, it appears Christina took literary umbrage at the inherent chauvinism of this publically and privately renowned poem. For the pious Christina, the concept of elevating intrinsically erotic love above the love of God was nothing short of sacrilege.[182] Consequently, Christina appears to parody 'The Blessed Damozel' in her 1863 poem 'The Poor Ghost'.[183]

The story told within this sardonic piece is extremely similar to that of 'The Blessed Damozel'. The female Beloved is deceased; she is fair with a 'face as white as snow' (l.30) and possesses

[180] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel' in *Poems. A New Edition.* (London: Ellis & White, 1881), (pp.3-9), ll.1-2. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[181] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* p.66. This scene was previously discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.
[182] As discussed in Chapter Two, many of Christina's work emphasise the elevation of the love of God above that of a man, for instance her 'The Convent Threshold' (in *Poetical Works,* pp.71-76).
[183] Christina Rossetti, 'The Poor Ghost', *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti, With Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), pp.359-360. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

the same 'golden hair all fallen below [her] knee' (l.2). Nonetheless, the titular Ghost's beauty is portrayed as far less beckoning than that of the Damozel; her pale skin is not portrayed through blossoming and delicate images like roses or lilies, but instead through the cold snow. Her golden locks do not tumble over a golden bar of heaven but are 'uncurled with dripping dew' (l.6). Both poems are inverted elegies in which the dead mourn after the living and instead of looking down from heaven, Christina's female speaker returns as a ghost: '[f]rom the other world I come back to you' (l.5). She does not decry the sanctuary of heaven like the Damozel, rather her ghost form implies, as Waldman observes: 'a far worse living death in the nebulous zone of limbo, which Christina Rossetti once described as "the most horrible of all deaths imaginable."'[184] The Gothic elements of this poem heighten the Ghost's need to see her lover again, as we do not know what she endures in the 'other world' (l.5), but if Dante Gabriel's Damozel can be displeased with heaven without her lover, we can assume she is suffering. Their subject matters are heavily similar, yet the very titles of these poems emphasise the differing posthumous circumstances. Where the Damozel still retains her femininity in her "maiden-like" title, and is "blessed" to be loved and in heaven, Christina's heroine is known only as the "ghost". No longer considered a woman, she does not belong on earth or in heaven, her situation "poor". The reader is encouraged to pity her before the poem begins, whereas Dante Gabriel misleads his audience as to the true misery of his heroine. The ghost is not only "poor" due to her unrewarding afterlife, but also because of how her lover reacts to the vision of her.

In her spectral form, she revisits her lover, crossing a boundary which the Damozel cannot. The phantom provides the ideal symbol through which Christina can make her point; it is not her intent to bring the lovers closer in order to spark a star-crossed love story, instead she wants the ghost's lover to confront her. Once the lovers are reunited, the 'Damozel' parody begins as the ghost expresses how much she misses her paramour, but also to tell him of his

[184] Waldman, *The Demon and the Damozel,* p.51.

impending death: 'You know the old, whilst I know the new: | But to-morrow you shall know this too' (ll.7-8). Much like the Damozel, the Ghost has been "pining" for her earthbound love and hopes he misses her just as much: 'I (the Damozel) wish that he were come to me' (l.67). The Ghost speaks cheerily of her love's death, but he is far less enthusiastic – as Serena Trowbridge observes, the 'reaction' is the key moment of this poem.[185] He pleads with the ghost to not take him to the 'other world' quite yet: 'give me another year, another day […] not to-morrow' (l.10). To make matters worse, the frightened lover uses the marriage vows to relinquish himself from blame at his reaction, stating: 'Through sickness I was ready to tend: | But death mars all, which we cannot mend' (ll.19-20). It is an echo of the 'sickness and in health, till death do us part' declaration of the wedding ceremony. The male lover – presumably her betrothed – is arguing that he fulfilled his promises to her in life, and therefore owes her nothing in death. The Ghost is not devastated as one would expect, but confused and demands that he explains himself, insinuating that he had asked her to return: 'But why did your tears soak through the clay, and when did your sobs wake me where I lay?' (ll.33-34) The image of tears soaking through clay suggests that the lover had been recently weeping above the Ghost's grave, and this is what initiated her return. However, there is an alternate image of Pygmalion proportions which is also created. In the Greek myth, the sculptor Pygmalion moulds the perfect woman from clay, falling in love with her. Through the power of the goddess Aphrodite, Pygmalion either cries over or kisses the statue – depending on the myth – and she is brought to life. Furthermore, she describes love as the 'reed' which the Damozel 'leant upon' (l.26), echoing how Siddal and her fellow "stunners" depended upon their ability to be adored to obtain work and be "brought to life" on the canvas. By invoking myth and artistic parallels, Christina is creating the relationship of lovers torn between life and death, but also the dynamic of artist and model, linking another poem to Dante Gabriel and Siddal. Reunification is the ultimate goal of both Dante Gabriel's Damozel and her beloved, both repeating 'we two' throughout the poem: '(Alas! we two, we

[185] Serena Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.28.

two, thou [Damozel] say'st! | Yea, one wast thou with me)' (ll.97-98). The man yearns for a reunion almost as desperately as the Damozel – especially in later redrafts of the poem, where he imagines she has tangibly returned to him: '(Surely she lean'd o'er me—her hair | Fell all about my face… |)'[186] In 'The Poor Ghost', Christina grants a similar couple the death-defying reunion they desire, yet she is not wishing to reunite with her lover on earth, like Cathy in *Wuthering Heights,* nor in Heaven like the Damozel, but in Purgatory. She is asking him to risk the "in-between", but believes that he will accept purgatory for the sake of being together. When the Damozel's lover dies, we assume he will enter Heaven, all they have to do is wait, still she 'laid her face between her hands, | And wept. (I heard her tears).' (ll.143-144) Christina truly tests the strength of her romance with the threat of the unknown, the moral of the narrative is no longer "love conquers all" but "be careful what you wish for".

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall contains the same caveat. While both Branwell and Huntingdon believed their lovers could shape their character, Anne argues that once a man "obtains" this long sought-after woman he will grow uninterested. It is the chase of the woman which fills Romantic poetry, not the married life after. Once Huntingdon realises Helen is no longer prohibited, he accuses her of 'breaking your marriage vows […] You promised to honour and obey me, and now you attempt to hector over me' (322). Subsequently, his attentions transfer to another woman, a *femme fatale* worthy of Gondal: Annabella Wilmot.[187] As Stevie Davies argues, a Byronic man can only be "managed" by an equally flawed Byronic woman, and '[t]he scintillating sex-appeal of Arthur Huntingdon and the voluptuous physique of Annabella Wilmot may well be relics of Gondal.'[188] Although Helen emulates Lady Byron's

[186] This stanza was added to *The Blessed Damozel* circa. 1873, and is included on the poem extract written on the base of the frame of the painting (designed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti).
[187] Huntingdon begins flirting with Annabella Wilmot whilst he charms Helen. Similarly, Beecher Stowe believes Byron, in desperate search for matrimonial deliverance, proposed to two women at the same time, the other lady declined while the then-Miss Annabella Milbanke accepted. (Beecher Stowe, *Lady Byron Vindicated,* p.429.)
[188] Stevie Davies, 'Introduction' to Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (London: Penguin, 1996), p.viii.

sufferings, Miss Wilmot shares her name to emphasise her role as a Byronic heroine. Her appearance even replicates that of Gondal's Queen A.G.A[189], with dark hair, dark eyes and an air of unattainable mystery: 'She certainly is a magnificent creature! […] with the glossy dark hair, slightly and not ungracefully disordered by the breezy ride […] the black eyes sparkling with unwonted brilliance.' (322) In further resemblance of A.G.A., Annabella is fully aware of the effect she has upon men, as Helen observes: 'she knows her power, and she uses it too.' (319) She is a beautiful flirt, who soon marries for money and title, becoming 'Lady Lowborough'. Her marriage only serves to make her appear more "forbidden" to Huntingdon and the affair intensifies. When Helen learns of the relationship, she rebukes Huntingdon's 'endeavour to steal a woman's affection from her husband', and askes herself 'Can I love a man that does such things, and coolly maintains it is nothing?' (322) Huntingdon not only disregards Helen and Lowborough's feelings, but appears to enjoy knowing how their affair would torment Annabella's new husband, flaunting it to Helen: 'I tell you Helen, it would break his heart' (321). Similarly, Branwell implies in his correspondence that he enjoys concealing his letters to Mrs. Robinson from her husband by using his 'Northangerland' pseudonym and using her coachman as a go-between: 'she sent the Coachman over to me yesterday, and the account which he gave of her sufferings was enough to burst my heart.'[190] His moment of greatest "triumph" came in May 1846 after the death of Mr. Robinson, or so Branwell believed: 'Mr Robinson of Thorp Green is <u>dead</u> [sic.]'.[191] With the removal of Mr. Robinson, Branwell allowed himself 'reason to hope that ere <very> long I should be the husband of a lady whom I loved best in the world'.[192] Seemingly unaware of how his youth and penury prevented this, Lydia Robinson and her family constructed a story that Mr. Robinson's will thwarted their affair. Ellis describes how Mrs. Robinson began the lie by

[189] Please refer to Chapter One of this thesis.
[190] Branwell Bronte letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated June 1846. [Letter 11], MS.19c Bronte/02/01/11 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)
[191] Ibid.
[192] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).

'getting the coachman to lie that Mr. Robinson's will stipulated that if his widow saw Branwell again, she would lose everything. […] Branwell was too tender to see that he was being manipulated'.[193] His letter to Leyland highlights how deeply he believed her: 'Her Coachman said that it was a pity to see her, for she was only able to kneel in her bedroom in bitter tears and prayers. [194] Branwell impressed the nobility of Mrs. Robinson's supposed sacrifice of their love in a letter to Leyland, in which he claims to have received a note from her maid Miss Ann Marshall, detailing Mr. Robinson's interdiction:

> I know [sic.] from it that she has been terrified by vows which she was forced to swear to, on her husband's deathbed, (with every ghastly addition of terror which the ghastly dying eye could inflict upon a keenly sensitive and almost worried woman's mind) a complete severance from him in whom lay her whole hearts feelings.[195]

Nevertheless, Mrs. Robinson sufficiently recovered by August 1848, the month prior to Branwell's death, as Charlotte sardonically noted to Ellen Nussey:

> The Misses R say that their mother does not care in the least what becomes of them; she is only anxious to get them husbands of any kinds that they may be off her hands, and that she may be free to marry Sir. E. Scott – whose infatuated slave, it would appear, she is.'[196]

While the affair brought nothing but suffering to the Brontë and Robinson families, Branwell was content to live in the illusion that he was the Byronic hero he had always desired to become. He lived the same way Huntingdon argues Annabella's husband does: 'just as happy in the illusion as if it were reality.' (321)

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[193] Ellis, p.222.
[194] Branwell Bronte letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated June 1846. [Letter 11]
[195] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18]
[196] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 18th August 1848 in *Life in Letters,* p.204.

Helen knows Huntingdon is a hypocrite in his declaring Lord Lowborough as labouring under an illusion, as he too has fallen under her spell. He believes he is using her to incite jealousy in Helen and entertain himself. However, Annabella knows the power she holds over men and uses Huntingdon to tease her husband and Helen, publically 'coquetting with Mr. Huntingdon, who is quite willing to be her partner in the game' (237). Anne describes the affair as a form of "play", emphasises how Branwell was pretending to be Northangerland incarnate. Helen is far more aware of Annabella's hold over Huntingdon than he is, growing to pity and shedding tears over him: 'It was not for Lord Lowborough – it was not for Annabella – it was not for myself – it was for Arthur Huntingdon that they rose.' (324) Helen is aware of how fabricated Huntingdon and Annabella's supposed connection is – consistently describing their dynamic in terms such as 'enchantment'; 'game' and 'illusion' – because she knows that neither portray their true "selves" in front of the other. For instance, one night when Huntingdon is drinking excessively, Helen observes how the addiction makes 'his face red and bloated; and that it tends to render him imbecile in body and mind; and if Annabella were to see him as often as I do, she would speedily be disenchanted.' (334) Helen's bitter observations lead us to speculate if Anne wishes Mrs. Robinson could witness the downfall of Branwell and effectively end the illusion of forbidden love. Moreover, although Huntingdon maintains his affair with Annabella, Helen remains his ultimate "goal". He describes Annabella a 'daughter of earth' whilst Helen is an 'angel' (322), with Annabella being 'mere dust and ashes in comparison' (323). Huntingdon grounds Annabella on earth, to demonstrate her true "attainability" and the lack of chase she provides. By comparing her with 'dust and ash', we are reminded of Genesis 3:19 and the traditional funeral sermon: 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. Consequently, Anne is stating that Annabella and all the addictions she represents will be the death of Huntingdon, just as Branwell's addictions to opiates, alcohol, and the Northangerland illusion resulted in his death.

Christina equally warns her reader of the damnation which can result from blindly pursuing a Romantic ideal in 'The Poor Ghost'. It is highly likely that Christina was inspired to return and respond to 'The Blessed Damozel' because Dante Gabriel had done the same. During the period 'The Poor Ghost' was conceived, Dante Gabriel was plotting one of his most famous works: *Beata Beatrix.* [Fig.10.] The memory of Elizabeth Siddal was the model of this piece, which depicts Beatrice in the middle of Florence, her eyes closed and her head turned towards the heavens, suggestive of her impending death. Heather Birchall explains how this portrait became particularly famous due to the posthumous depiction of Siddal. The painting claims to depict Dante's Beatrice however, the 'unfocused quality of the painting contributes to its visionary quality (similar to the effects of opium), and reflects Rossetti's current interest in spiritualism and his attempt to make contact with his dead wife.'[197] It is conceivable that the effective shattering of the illusion of a haunting lover is Christina's attempt to eradicate her brother's sudden preoccupation with communing with the dead. Dante Gabriel had been fascinated with star-crossed stories such as these from an early age, as demonstrated by the juvenile piece 'Paul and Virginia' submitted to *Hodge Podge* in 1843.[198] However, nineteen years after this early idealisation of love conquering death, Dante Gabriel's model and wife Elizabeth Siddal died. The Romantic preoccupation with what Trowbridge summarises as 'death as an aesthetic category'[199], was no longer simply a theoretical storyline for Dante Gabriel. Suddenly, Dante Gabriel yearned for a recovery of his wife in art just as Dante Alighieri coveted a vision of Beatrice in *The Divine Comedy.* Death has made her the supreme of unreachable love, another angelic standard which can only be achieved posthumously. The accompanying portrait even depicts the Damozel with the red locks which Elizabeth Siddal was renowned for, despite having blonde hair in the original poem.[200]

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[197] Heather Birchall, *Pre-Raphaelites* (Cologne: Taschen, 2010), p.72.
[198] This submission was explored in Chapter One of this thesis.
[199] Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic,* p.28.
[200] This is the same shade of auburn used in the vast majority of Dante Gabriel's paintings which depict Beatrice, including 'Beata Beatrix' (1864); 'Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice' (1871) and 'The Salutation of Beatrice' (c.1880-81).

Consequently, the context of 'The Poor Ghost's' production could render Christina's timing insensitive. She completed this poem the year after Elizabeth Siddal's death when her brother was experiencing grief, not as a literary motif, but as a human struggle. To write a poem about, not only a Pre-Raphaelite beauty haunting her lover, but to have the reunion be underwhelming, can be construed as highly personal. However, it appears Christina was in fact attempting to "rescue" her brother and his late wife from his "profane" art. Trowbridge emphasises that Christina's religion 'firmly rejected occultism and attempts to interact with the supernatural, such as séances'[201], therefore this could be interpreted as highlighting the sacrilegious aspects of Dante Gabriel's life and art – as the Ghost's lover declares: 'I loved you for life, but life has an end.' (l.18) Christina's exploration of the relationship between art and subject implies she is decrying Dante Gabriel's preoccupation with the deathly aesthetic, stressing: 'death mars all, which we cannot mend' (l.20) Her brother's fascination with posthumous reunion was much simpler when he was simply emulating Byron and Dante, however the "vision" has become reality, and Christina is encouraging her brother to recognise the difference. As the Brontë sisters insisted Branwell distinguish himself from the degenerate 'Northangerland', Christina was stating that Dante Gabriel should not disturb the dead. Helen Rossetti Angeli explains that Dante Gabriel has made Siddal indissoluble with the image of "beautiful death" in life, '[o]ne visualises [Siddal] as Beatrice in a Death-Trance, *Beata Beatrix* […] we think of her on her death-bed', now in death with the beginning of *Beata Beatrix,* the public's image of Siddal's decease heighted: 'unresponsive to her husband's touch and despairing words of love, so utterly at rest that William [Michael] could not dissociate her from Dante's vision of Beatrice: And with her was such very humbleness | That she appeared to say "I am at peace".'[202] Now Siddal was dead, she had finally assimilated into the perfect Beatrice to his Dante. In 'The Poor Ghost', Christina is imploring

[201] Trowbridge, *Christina Rossetti's Gothic,* p.27.
[202] Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies,* p.186.

her brother to relinquish the artist's image and mourn Siddal as she was, not as she is supposedly meant to be – as the Poor Ghost pleads: 'Let me sleep now till the judgement day.' (l.36)

Figure 10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Beata Beatrix' (Tate Britain, c.1864-70)

Using their respective 'read and respond' critiques of each other's work, both sibling circles seem to decry their former collaborators' attempts to forge ahead on their own in the way expected of a first born/only son. Analysing this in historical context, with the biographical details provided by the surviving sibling, we can interpret it as an attempt to correct what was seen as bad and destructive behaviour in a much loved brother and co-author. Charlotte and Branwell Brontë perform a creative, scripted battle over their childhood protagonist, Alexander Percy, in which Branwell uses him to strike out alone, turning him, literally, into a 'Rougue', while Charlotte deconstructs him to highlight the destructive consequences of gambling and alcohol. While William Michael Rossetti encourages his brother Dante Gabriel to return to the collaborative *bouts-rimés* of childhood in an attempt to recover 'Gabriel Charles', Christina, disappointed with Dante Gabriel's attempt to "sell" her as another artist's inspiration, deconstructs his art through her poetry into a depiction of glorified "play" and shows where he was lacking in brotherly duty. Primogeniture placed a societal and familial burden on men like Branwell and Dante Gabriel, which only increased with the family's

collective desire for artistic recognition. Consequently, the 'pride and hope'[203] imposed on these sons and brothers often felt too great a pressure to bear, which resulted in these men frequently distancing themselves from their former collaborators.

[203] Charlotte Brontë describing Branwell as '[h]is father's and sister's pride and hope' in a letter to William Smith Williams, dated 2nd October 1848, after Branwell's death in *A Life in Letters,* (208-209), p.209.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Last Sibling Standing: Charlotte Brontë and William Michael Rossetti as Custodians of the Family Legacy

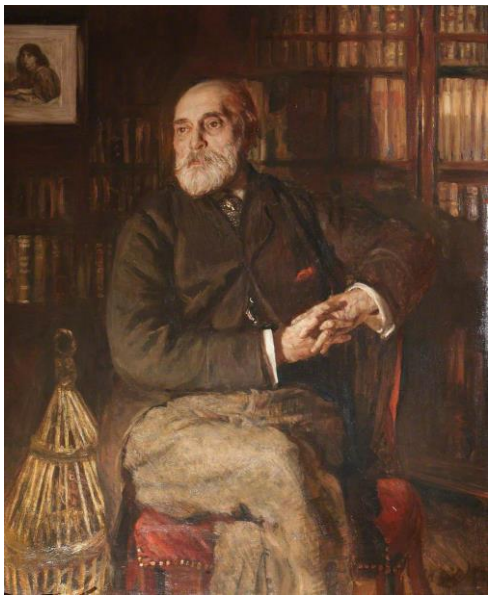

Figure 1. George Richmond, 'Charlotte Brontë', (National Portrait Gallery, 1850)
Figure 2. Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, 'William Michael Rossetti',
(Wightwick Manor, circa.1895)

1849 & 1894: Worlds of Sadness

A co-dependence develops when an author's earliest literary efforts are familial and collaborative, as the previous chapters of this thesis have argued. This chapter will examine what occurs when tragedy leaves only one "surviving" sibling standing – a title declared by William Smith Williams to contain 'a world of sadness'[1] – and how these survivors react creatively when their former co-authors' support is irretrievably absent. Charlotte Brontë's rapid loss of her siblings and co-authors began, as Patsy Stoneman observes, with her brother Branwell 'who was rapidly sinking under a combination of unhappy love, alcoholic and drug-induced lethargy, and genuine severe illness.'[2] By the summer of 1849 Charlotte

[1] Publisher William Smith Williams declared in a letter dated 21st December 1848 to Charlotte Brontë, following the deaths of Branwell and Emily Brontë. (*A Life in Letters*, Ed. Juliet Barker (London: Penguin Books, 1998) (216-217) p.216.) Williams was, in fact, referring to Anne, extending his condolences to Charlotte's remaining sibling unaware that, merely a year later, Charlotte would become the sole survivor of Patrick's children.

[2] Patsy Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 40, No.1. (January 2015), (22-33), p.25.

had lost three siblings in the space of nine months, whereas William Michael's loss of the original Polidori-Rossetti generation was far more gradual; having previously lost Gabriele (d.1854) and Maria (d.1876). William Michael recollected in 1906 that 'in the thirteen years beginning with 1882 all the persons dearest to me, except my four surviving children, were swept away.'[3] Unlike Charlotte, who still had Patrick to remind her of happier days, by 1894 William Michael had outlived both of his parents, all three of his siblings, and even his wife.[4] Although neither Charlotte nor William Michael was left without family, both had lost all familial collaborators. However, in Charlotte's *Shirley*[5] and William Michael's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, with a Memoir*[6]*,* there is a tangible endeavour to recreate the working, sibling dynamic of their childhoods in commemorative literature. Although *His Family-Letters* was predominantly based on Dante Gabriel, this memoir grants insight into how Maria came to be the least discussed of the siblings and how Christina developed into such a celebrated poet. Both texts were written while these family losses were occurring, hence this analysis will explore how the inter-reliant nature of the literary family affected the surviving siblings' writing style when the threat of losing this collaborative environment loomed.

While previous critics have explored the tone and technique of the surviving siblings when recollecting their co-authors in publication, their predominant focus is on Charlotte and William's eventual roles as upholders, and posthumous editors, of the family. Biographers often run the risk of overlooking the authorial anxieties of a surviving literary sibling as private issues were often augmented by larger public pressures. Their career had always

[3] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.515.
[4] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.553.
[5] Currer Bell (Charlotte Brontë), *Shirley: A Tale* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1888). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[6] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti, His Family-Letters, with a Memoir,* Vol.1. (London: Ellis, 1895). All subsequent references will be given parenthetically, the title henceforth be abbreviated to *His Family-Letters*. This work refers to Vol.1 of *His Family-Letters*, unless stated otherwise.

been integrated with their siblings, as such, the survivors becoming lightning rods for both praise and criticism for the entire family. William Michael, with the public success of the Rossettis and without the literary acknowledgement afforded Charlotte Brontë, felt this acutely. These sibling biographers were writing when pre-existing interpretations of themselves and their siblings were pervading public perception; where Charlotte's *Shirley* could conceal parallels between her sibling dynamic and that of her characters - since the personal lives of the Bell brothers remained shrouded in mystery - William Michael had to contend with the public images of Dante Gabriel and Christina. Adherence to the family image was required to satisfy their public. Nevertheless, their private intentions were to protect and recreate their earlier literary dynamic. Neither Brontë nor Rossetti could relinquish their sibling's support and influence, even in death, resulting in a new form of posthumous collaboration.

Following these deaths, both writers struggled to recommence their individual works. Their associations with writing as a forum for sibling-input meant that a return to work was to recall their bereavement. Charlotte felt this intensely, hoping to maintain the role of fiction writer as respite from reality, as it had once been during her homesickness and emotional ordeal at Roe Head School.[7] She had begun *Shirley* in February 1848, in an attempt to distract herself from her brother's debauchery. However, as each sibling sickened in turn, Charlotte increasingly hoped that the static pages of *Shirley* would prevent her from looking 'backwards' at her past losses and 'forwards' towards potential future calamities.[8] This anxiety only increased as she lost her sisters since, when she began *Shirley,* as Stoneman writes, 'it was still her habit to read what she had written that day […] while they walked around the dining-room table in the evening.'[9] Her multiple attempts to resume her novel

[7] As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis – please refer specifically to the analysis of Charlotte's 'Roe Head Journal'.
[8] Charlotte to William Smith Williams, 18th January 1849, *A Life in Letters,* (223-224), p.224.
[9] Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', p.25.

over nearly two years retained what Juliet Barker refers to as 'something akin to desperation'[10], while she attempted to maintain her sisters' support in fiction. Consequently, the female characters echo her sisters' personalities and reassuring natures. It is widely-accepted amongst Brontë scholars that the titular Shirley is a literary echo of Emily. Claire O'Callaghan conclusively declares *Shirley* to be 'the earliest fictionalisation of Emily'[11], citing both women's affinity for animals[12] and propensity for shooting: 'Charlotte drew further attention to Emily's masculinity in her fictionalisation of her sister in *Shirley,* where Emily appears in the guises of the land-owning heiress who knows how to handle herself with a gun.'[13] According to Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte maintained that the eponymous, independent protagonist was a literary depiction of 'what Emily Brontë would have been, had she been placed in health and prosperity'.[14] As Stoneman's article 'Shirley as Elegy' enumerates, there are parallels between Emily's unconventional preference for religious "feeling", graphic visions and reverence for nature, to those of Shirley.[15] This chapter will expand upon Stoneman's points to demonstrate how the visionary Shirley emulates Emily's poetry in her language and her opinions. Moreover, this chapter will explore the similarities between Shirley and the protagonist Caroline Helstone's dynamic and that of Emily and Anne. The mutual respect, friendship and debate-driven partnership of Shirley and Caroline resonates with the siblings' own 'Gondalian' deliberations: 'it flashes on me (Caroline) at this moment how sisters feel towards each other – affection twined with their life […] I am supported and soothed when you – that is, you only – are near, Shirley.' (152) During the

[10] Barker, Ed. *A Life in Letters,* p.241.
[11] Claire O'Callaghan, *Emily Brontë: Reappraised: A View from the Twenty-First Century* (Salford: Saraband, 2018), p.140.
[12] O'Callaghan argues 'Charlotte transported the relationship between Emily and [her dog] Keeper' into Shirley and her 'lion-like bulk', named Tartar. (*Shirley,* p.264) This reading corresponds with that of Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson: '[a]t various times there was more than one dog in the parsonage (including Emily's mongrel dog Keeper- the model for "Tartar" in *Shirley* – and Anne's dog Flossy)' in *Celebrating Charlotte Brontë: Transforming Life into Literature in* Jane Eyre (Norwich: Swallowtail Print Ltd., 2016), p.157.
[13] O'Callaghan, *Emily Brontë: Reappraised,* p.120.
[14] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.2. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858), p.95.
[15] Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', pp.22-33.

most tumultuous periods of their lives, Emily and Anne often could only find solace in each other, as demonstrated by the Diary Papers discussed in Chapter Three, and Caroline and Shirley's dynamic mimics this. These women also reflect the literary tastes of Charlotte's sisters as they were constructing the Gondal kingdoms:

> Caroline's instinct of taste, too, was like her own. Such books as Miss Keeldar had read with the most pleasure were Miss Helstone's delight also. They held many aversions too in common, and could have the comfort of laughing together over works of false sentimentality and pompous pretension. (24)

Caroline's almost ethereal femininity perfectly balances Shirley's more decisive, masculine character, which leads them to embark on "adventures" together. In a scene where the two young women decide to infiltrate a Luddite rebellion against Robert Moore's mill, Caroline states:

> Do not fear that I shall not have breath to run as fast as you can possibly run, Shirley. Take my hand. Let us go straight across the fields.'
>
> [Shirley:] 'But you cannot climb walls?'
>
> 'To-night I can.' (191)

The description of Shirley and Caroline's observation of the Luddite uprising is not dissimilar to Emily and Anne's diary papers in which they describe the Gondalian Royal Family being threatened by anti-Monarchists, with the Brontë sisters depicting the prince and princesses 'escaping from the palaces of Instruction to join the Royalists who are hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans.'[16] Equally, when Caroline tells Shirley she wishes to become a governess, Shirley's immediate fear of separation is reminiscent of Emily's feelings of abandonment while Anne was working 'exiled and harassed'[17] as a governess. Shirley tells Caroline that 'You don't care much for my friendship, then, that you wish to leave me?', to

[16] Emily Brontë's Diary Paper, Thursday, July 30, 1845 in *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal: Selected Early Writings*, Ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) (490-491), p.490.

[17] Emily Brontë's Diary Paper, 30th July 1841 in *Tales of Glasstown* (488-489), p.489.

which Caroline replies 'I don't wish to leave you. I shall never find another friend so dear.' (144) With Emily and Anne being described by their maid Martha as 'twins' in her recollections, Charlotte's language here is indicative of being inspired by their authorial dynamic, wishing to "resurrect" their literary and sisterly support. Few critics have accepted that Anne's personality could have had an influence upon *Shirley's* plot. Charlotte, as far as her surviving correspondence shows, never admitted to Anne being a source of inspiration in her lifetime. J.M.S. Tompkins grants that Charlotte invested a lot of her own personality into Caroline as her speech copies 'her own grandiose and romantic intentions'[18], as Caroline's unrequited love for Robert Moore echoes Charlotte's towards her married tutor Monsieur Heger. Tompkins continues to argue that Caroline is far more akin to Anne in appearance, in her determination to become a governess and how she is coddled by her friends and family. However, there are much clearer analogies to Anne's first novel *Agnes Grey* and Caroline's internal monologue. While her mother Mrs. Pryor, as she is revealed to be, bears the maiden name Agnes Grey, Caroline, in her determination to prove herself and become a governess, is excessively similar to Anne's own protagonist. However, the Gondal juvenilia was not the only "alliance" Charlotte endeavoured to revitalise.

It was not death which had first inspired Charlotte to commence writing *Shirley,* but defamation and deadlines. Following the tremendous success of *Jane Eyre,* her publishers intimated heavily that they would be expecting a second novel soon: 'I (Charlotte) had better make another venture in the 3 vol. novel form.'[19] Although Charlotte felt the pressure to match, if not better, her previous success, writing *Shirley* also provided a distraction from Branwell's fall from grace. The loss of her former co-author to addiction and loss of talent, combined with professional burden, led Charlotte to return to their Angrian Kingdom for

[18] J.M. S. Tompkins, 'Caroline Helsone's Eyes', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol.14, Issue 1 (1961) (18-28), p.20.
[19] Charlotte letter to William Smith Williams, dated 14th December 1847, in Barker, *A Life in Letters,* (173-174), p.173.

inspiration. Although Charlotte did not openly lament the loss of Branwell as strongly as she did her other siblings[20], the voice he contributed to the juvenilia is clear in *Shirley* with the depictions of intemperance, chauvinism and anti-romance of the opening chapters heavily reminiscent of Branwell's short stories.[21] In *Shirley,* Charlotte emulates her siblings' writing and allows them to drive the characters and scenery. Thus, the juvenilia-era was revived and the page, once again, became the conduit for a literary séance.[22]

Nostalgia and co-dependence drive William Michael's writing style in *His Family-Letters*. His siblings Dante Gabriel and Christina had become renowned for their extreme depictions of love and death, yet it was William Michael who became a respected pioneer of a genre initiated by both these circumstances, the family biography. His career has always been connected to the reputations of his brother and younger sister, if not reinforced by this connection to their fame. However, in 1894, it was the loss of his final connection to their childhood which William rightfully mourned the most. His attempts to control the literary afterlives of siblings began in the same manner as Charlotte's, before his "final" sibling passed away. As he recalls, 'I returned home in the middle of April from witnessing my wife's last hours, only to find that my sister […] would soon be taking to her deathbed.'[23] While Christina was still ill, William Michael distracted himself from the loss of his wife and the impending death of his only remaining sister with a new project which sparked his contemporary reputation as chronicler of his family history. Publically, William Michael is perceived as 'a tower of strength to the whole family'[24], as Janet Camp Troxell christens him, and a guardian of their reputation. This project would become *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His*

[20] As noted in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[21] As we previously explored in Chapters Two and Four of this thesis hyper-masculinity, as well as the preoccupation with war and intoxication, were frequent themes in Branwell Brontë's juvenilia.
[22] We may recall from Chapter One of this thesis that, for the Brontës, literature had previously been used to "resurrect" the personality and image of their mother, Maria, using her literary relics.
[23] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.553.
[24] Janet Camp Troxell, Ed. *Three Rossettis: Unpublished letters to and from Dante Gabriel, Christina, William* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), p.181.

Family-Letters, with a Memoir. Dinah Roe argues that it was this commission he gave himself which solidified his restrained reputation as a literary lackey: writing about the talents of others because he, supposedly, possessed little of his own. As Dinah Roe deduces, 'Even though (Dante) Gabriel was dead, William still found himself working for his brother *gratis.*'[25] His supposed martyrdom had been established amongst grateful admirers of the Rossetti family such as Edith Sitwell, who believed him a 'saintly and sweet character whose whole life was given to his family […] who scarcely allowed himself the right to individual happiness.'[26] Less sympathetic critics viewed William Michael as a Polidori-esque vampire, who fed upon his brother's rakish reputation to sell books, 'thereby squeezing the last sixpence out of his brother's body'.[27] William Michael was well aware of this mixed reception following the publication of *His Family-Letters* as the introduction of the second volume of *Some Reminiscences* asks his readers to pardon his authorship: 'That I should myself become my brother's biographer, was far from my wish.'[28] Public demand meant that, less than a fortnight after '[t]he coffin had closed'[29], William Michael was writing to the editor of the *Athenaeum*: 'I hope to organise a large exhibition of the works of my brother Dante Rossetti.'[30] The public had been demanding such a 'decidedly attractive'[31] exhibit prior to his death, but the Academy became fixed on the idea 'in deference to some degree of general outcry'[32]. It would seem from his correspondence that William Michael was receiving the highest demand from his and Dante Gabriel's colleagues, most notably Theodore Watts-Dunton and Algernon Swinburne, writing to the first, somewhat sardonically, 'I gather from

[25] Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011), p.340.
[26] Edith Sitwell, *English Women* (London: W. Collins, 1942), p.41.
[27] *Sunday Times* reviewer, as cited in *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies,* Helen Rossetti Angeli (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p.19.
[28] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.555.
[29] William Michael Rossetti letter to Fanny Cornforth, 14th April 1882, in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti, Ed.* Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p.416.
[30] William Michael Rossetti letter to the Editor of the Athenaeum, 26th April 1882, *Selected Letters,* p.417.
[31] William Michael Rossetti Diary Entry, dated 4th January 1883, cited in *Selected Letters,* footnotes, p.417.
[32] Ibid.

your letter that you would not have any sort of objection to […] the proposed book on Gabriel's Works'[33], and the latter insisting on seeing a 'presentation-copy' of the work.[34] William Michael explains that this collection of missives was not, initially, his project. His opening lines to the memoir acknowledges that it was not his wish, or even Dante Gabriel's, that he should complete this work. The introduction quotes Hall Caine's 1882 biography *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* which explains Dante Gabriel's desire that his artistic associate, critic and poet Theodore Watts-Dunton[35] should write the memoir 'unless indeed it were undertaken by his brother William' (ix). Ironically, Watts-Dunton was the initiator of this memoir, asking William Michael for his blessing and his collection of his brother's letters. William Michael was happy to allow Watts-Dunton to become the primary author, stating that he was 'exceedingly well qualified to do so, from his own knowledge of the last ten years of Dante Gabriel's life, and I furnished him with some details of earlier years.'[36] However, Watts-Dunton's biography remained incomplete and, in need of a project and determined his brother should be commemorated, William Michael offered to relieve Watts-Dunton of his duties, which he accepted. The need for distraction is indicated in his introduction where William Michael states 'circumstances have proved too strong' (xi) for him to wait any longer to reconnect with his brother's memory. The combination of authorial impatience and grief-induced nostalgia meant the memoir transformed from the Pre-Raphaelite recollections of Watts-Dunton into stories of their parents and their childhood '[b]efore Pre-Raphaelitism came at all into question' (99). While Watts-Dunton wished to discuss the artist, William Michael wanted people to see his brother.

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[33] William Michael Rossetti letter to Theodore Watt-Dunton, dated 13th January 1888, *Selected Letters,* p.514.

[34] William Michael Rossetti letter to Theodore Watt-Dunton, dated 14th January 1887, *Selected Letters,* (501-502): 'I sent Swinburne the other day a presentation-copy of my brother's *Works',* p.501.

[35] Theodore Watts-Dunton was also the nurse and greatest friend of Rossetti's fellow Pre-Raphaelite Algernon Swinburne.

[36] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.555.

In a rare moment in the family's history, William Michael held all the authority; as Stanley Weintraub notes, '[t]he family letters, diaries, pictures and manuscripts were now William's'[37]. This chapter will emphasise how William repeatedly reminded the Rossetti fans that he was the gatekeeper to the family history. With the entire Rossetti archive at his disposal, William Michael decided what else the admirers could see, beyond the paintings already hanging on gallery walls, books on shelves and reviews in the public domain. His siblings' legacies had already begun, but William Michael could decide where they went next. The most difficult challenge came in controlling this brother's sensual repute, as J.B. Bullen explains that Dante Gabriel's artistic influence was felt 'only after his death', where 'the ways of the erotic life produced hostility in a number of critics […] as the furore died down he came to be seen as a poet who had dared to push back some of the barriers.'[38] Clashes over Dante Gabriel's reputation – what Suzanne Waldman encapsulates as 'masculine anxiety and sexual guilt'[39] – his shocking exhumation of his wife's grave, affairs and addictions, were not periods in Dante Gabriel's biography that William Michael was eager to recollect, but he knew that scandal would sell. The result is a two-track narrative acknowledging what the public wanted to read, and an alternative view of Dante Gabriel which only William Michael could share, using personal details and childhood memories in order look beyond the 'DGR' persona. His biographical celebration of Dante Gabriel's genius often deviates from details of his career to focus on the aspects of Dante Gabriel which only he could know. This was a technique he would utilise in even greater detail when collecting Christina's entire works in her *Poetical Works* (1906), which endeavours to give each verse a date of composition – and publication – as well as, what Alison Chapman refers to as, 'pains to give the poetry a relation to an actual event.'[40] By focusing heavily on his personal memories of their juvenilia and early studies, William Michael is attempting to recreate the early Rossetti collaborations.

[37] Stanley Weintraub, *Four Rossettis* (London: W H Allen, 1978), p.xii
[38] Bullen, *Rossetti: Painter and Poet,* p.258.
[39] Suzanne Waldman, *The Demon & The Damozel: Dynamics of Desire in the Works of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), p.125.
[40] Alison Chapman, *The Afterlife of Christina Rossetti* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000), p.72.

William Michael asserts that this is as much a memoir of the entire family, dedicating the book to his children 'with a father's hope that relatives of Dante and Christina Rossetti and descendants of Gabriele and Frances Rossetti will uphold the credit of their patronymic' (i). In deference to these Anglo-Italian roots, William Michael maintains Dante Gabriel's – and, to a lesser extent, Christina's – "image" as a cultural fusion of English and Italian nations.[41] The concept of dynasty was particular significant to William Michael when constructing this biography; not only was Christina collaborating on his work but Dante Gabriel was giving his opinion on Christina's poetry from beyond the grave. Using his brother's correspondence with his sister, William Michael cites Dante Gabriel's comments on Christina's work – both supportive and critical – to grant an insight into the artist as both brother and poet, the exact hybrid image William Michael intended to create. While Christina's poetry was being challenged posthumously by Dante Gabriel, Maria's intense privacy was being invaded to some extent by William Michael, who attempted to mention his elder sister wherever her vow of discretion might have permitted. Equally, the public image his brother had worked hard to construct was being tested by far more innocent childhood recollections, and William Michael refused to apologize for his technique: 'I have told what I chose to tell', he says in his introduction (xii). His methodology secures his future career as the Rossetti biographer, asking the reader to trust that he, with his all-access pass to his siblings' childhoods, works and deaths, could paint the most vivid picture of one of the most famous artistic families in London. He challenged, but did not completely overturn, the public perception of his siblings – mostly to create a layered, multi-faceted image of their literary history. Nevertheless, once Charlotte Bronte and William Michael Rossetti became determined to commemorate their childhood co-authors, their own trepidations at losing this familial support, is at the forefront of their methodology.

[41] Please refer to Chapter Two of this thesis to examine how the Rossetti children were inspired by the Italian heritage of their father.

The Kingdom Where Nobody Dies: "Resurrecting" Childhood and Juvenilia

Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote that '[c]hildhood is not from birth to a certain age'[42], and throughout this thesis we have discovered the true extent of how both the Brontë and Rossetti siblings would have concurred with this statement. Although each developed in ability to varying degrees these siblings rarely deviated from the themes and genres commenced in juvenilia. Branwell and Emily Brontë could never seem to relinquish their Angrian and Gondalian kingdoms, respectively. Whilst Emily, confirming Charlotte's expectations of her had she survived, was beginning to explore different ideas in her later Gondal poems. We witnessed in Chapter Four how Branwell clung to his 'Northangerland' persona in the declining years preceding his death, and, as Christine Alexander confirms, '[a]s late as May 1848, seven months before her death, [Emily] was working on a Gondal civil war poem: she never abandoned her imaginary world.'[43] Moreover, we can see from William Michael's efforts to timeline his siblings' works in *His Family-Letters* and *Poetical Works* how both Dante Gabriel and Christina would return to their earliest works and redraft continuously – 'The Blessed Damozel' and the motifs of *Maude*, respectively, having been discussed previously in this thesis. When Charlotte and William Michael wished to recall their deceased co-authors, the result was an intriguing case of elegiac writings imitating earlier works. Charlotte and William Michael do not only emulate their siblings, but their writing styles. Where Charlotte imitated her siblings' juvenilia, William Michael tried to respect the literary "selves" his siblings had created – or lack thereof, in the case of Maria. We are reminded in these writing styles of Charlotte's letter to William Smith Williams following the death of Branwell, where she mourns the 'the wreck of talent, the ruin of

[42] Edna St. Vincent Millay, 'Childhood is the Kingdom Where Nobody Dies', *St. Vincent Millay: Selected Poems (American Poets Project),* Ed. J.D. McClatchy (New York: Library of America, 2003) (148-150), l.1.
[43] Christine Alexander, Ed. *Tales of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal*: *Selected Early Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xxxix.

promise'[44] seemingly more than the brother himself. This is not to suggest that both Brontë and Rossetti were eulogising the author before the sibling, but rather that by emulating these works, these remaining writers could illustrate what was, and lament on what might have been, both in their private loss of familial connection and public loss of that talent. The connection with childhood these works offered was undoubtedly a comfort to Charlotte and William in these traumatic periods, but by patterning their own writing upon the raw, unpolished talent of their siblings, they could connect with a co-author unmarred by public demand. Juvenilia represented the brother/sister author in their private form. Although Charlotte's *Shirley* would enter the public domain, the fictional resemblances to her siblings and early works were entirely within her own knowledge. Only a modern reader with access and familiarity to the Brontë siblings' juvenilia could see parallels between its writing style and that of *Shirley*.[45] This fusion of public and private was one both Charlotte and William Michael exploited.[46] Where *Shirley* imitates Charlotte's siblings' tropes and language used in their juvenilia, William Michael directly recalls memories of their collaboration, citing textual examples of their co-operative process. The result is a literary catharsis and revivification of the "happier times" of juvenilia.

The most widely discussed parallel between *Shirley* and Brontë juvenilia is the titular character's similarities to Emily. The reading of Shirley as a representation of Emily is acknowledged by critics[47] because Charlotte herself stated that this was the case, as Shirley

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[44] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith Williams, dated 2nd October 1848, *A Life in Letters* (208-209), p.209.

[45] Arguably, due to the publication of *Poems* (1846), some readers may have recognised parallels between the juvenilia published in this collection and *Shirley,* the low sales rate meant such recognition would have been rare.
Charlotte's contemporaries – with, perhaps, the exception of family and friends – were unequipped and unaware of her mirror-technique, using similarity and differences to comment on societal expectations on women.

[46] Admittedly, William's chosen non-fictional genre and the wider celebrity of his siblings results in his work being far more vocal about this amalgamation, actively creating a distance between himself and the reader. Charlotte's fiction allows for concealment.

[47] For further reading, please refer to Patsy Stoneman's 'Shirley as Elegy', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 40, No.1. (January 2015), pp.22-33. Also, Stephen Earnshaw's Charlotte Brontë's Fictional Epistles' notes that

grew to be the 'most prominent and peculiar character'.[48] As Gaskell reasons, Charlotte reimagined Emily 'in health and prosperity'.[49] Shirley Keeldar is a brilliant heiress who returns to her hometown in Yorkshire in order to claim her property, and protect her interests from the looming threat of the Luddite Rebellion. Although the novel is named after this character, Shirley is not introduced until Chapter Eleven, where her physical appearance is described in exceptional detail. Charlotte's lengthy description emphasises that Shirley is 'no ugly heiress', she is taller than our protagonist Caroline, with a graceful form and charming countenance:

> Clear and dark were the characteristics of her aspect as to colour. Her face and brow were clear, her eyes of the darkest gray [sic.] (no green lights in them – transparent, pure, neutral gray), and hair of the darkest brown. Her features were distinguished – by which I do not mean that they were high, bony, and Roman, being indeed rather small (151)

The way in which the narrator refuses to allow our vision of Shirley to deviate from hers, emphasising to her readers what they must remember, and interjecting to correct and supplement her previous descriptions, is linked to Shirley's connection to Emily. [Fig.3.] Although the character's pale features, dark hair, high cheekbones and straight nose match every verified portrait of Emily Brontë, the eyes are slightly different. Jane Sellars notes that in Branwell Brontë's 'Pillar Portrait' of his sisters 'One of the physical aspects of the three faces is the different colours of the girls' eyes: Anne's are blue, Emily's a greenish-blue and Charlotte's eyes are brown.'[50] [Fig.4.] Other portraits, such as the surviving side-view of Emily from the 'Gun Group Portrait' (circa.1833) seem to depict Emily's eyes as 'the darkest

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Shirley's poor opinion of letter-writing as a 'pis-aller' (242) and a poor substitute for face-to-face conversation is similar to Emily's own belief, arguing: '[i]t would be easy to gloss Shirley's verdict in a biographical manner by saying that Shirley Keeldar is the fictional representation of Emily Brontë, who would appear to have little time for writing letters', p.204.

[48] Charlotte Brontë cited in *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës,* Ed. Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.12.

[49] Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Vol.2., p.95.

[50] Jane Sellars, 'Branwell Brontë's Family Portraits: Motives, Influences, and Legacy', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 36, No.1 (2011) (44-56), p.49.

grey', like Shirley's. Emily's eyes seem to change colour between Branwell's artistic interpretations, but Charlotte is steadfast that Shirley's have no hint of green in them. A reader may be somewhat confused, as if the author has declared her character's eyes to be grey, there seems to be no reason to assume a greenish tint. Nor would they assume from the description that Shirley was based on Emily as it had not yet been confirmed that Ellis Bell was a woman, as such, no one knew what Emily looked like. Charlotte's corrective tone feels personal, as if she is attempting to give absolute authority to her depiction and, thereby, Emily's memory. The descriptions used are reminiscent of Emily's poem 'F. De Samara to A.G.A.' (1838)[51], where Samara describes Gondal's *femme fatale* with 'black resplendent hair' and a 'glory-beaming brow', whilst he cannot seem to grasp a clear image of his lover's eyes: 'Thine eyes are turned away – those eyes I would not see, | Their dark, their deadly ray would more than madden me'. Where Samara refuses to recall A.G.A's eyes, Charlotte forces the reader to see her vision of Shirley's because, where the Gondal poem is a rejection of memory and its all-consuming ability, *Shirley* is a vessel for preserving, and "improving upon", memory. She is choosing to remember Emily's looks as she thinks suits her fictional counterpart best, the resolute grey eyes representing Shirley's steely nature and love for the misty moors; further traits that she and Emily share.

Charlotte Brontë would recall her sister Emily frequently, as a woman driven entirely by feeling. Her eldest sister's recollections of her character have cemented Emily's legacy as a woman of 'inartificial tastes, and an unpretending outside' with an internal 'fire that might have informed the brain and kindled the veins of a hero'.[52] Charlotte hyperbolised Emily's beliefs that nature and spirituality where phenomena to be *felt,* not simply studied, in her 1850 edits of Emily's poetry. The most blatant example of editing in order to accentuate

[51] Emily Brontë, *Gondal's Queen: A Novel in Verse, Ed.* Fannie Ratchford (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955), p.140.
[52] Charlotte Brontë, 'Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell' in Emily and Anne Brontë, *Wuthering Heights & Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870) (v-xiii), p.xii.

Emily's character is in her reworking of 'No Coward Soul is Mine', in which Charlotte takes Emily's devotional poem to the 'God within my breast, | Almighty, ever-present Deity(!)'[53], and saturates the passion with exclamation marks, inflections and capitalisations. Where Emily's original draft reads: 'Life, that in me hast rest | As I Undying Life, have power in thee' (ll.7-8), Charlotte's redraft is punctuated as follows: 'Life – that in me has rest, | As I – undying Life – have power in thee!' The added sentence breaks and exclamations create the sense of a poet unable to contain their emotions, and as both author and reader must, supposedly, pause for breath. Charlotte's choice of emphasis is unsubtle, not only for those who are familiar with the original text, especially in the final lines where 'Since thou are Being and Breath | And what thou art may never be destroyed' (ll.27-28) becomes 'Thou – THOU are Being and Breath, | And what THOU art may never be destroyed'. Charlotte is granting the poem a more explicitly devotional tone, the 'THOU' emphasising its revision being more concerned with God Himself rather than the God within, she is depicting her sister as a poet focused on divine transcendence over immanence.

Figure 3. T.H. Robinson 'Shirley put her arm around Caroline (Illustration) from Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (London: Collins, 1910), p.211.

[53] Emily Brontë, 'No Cowards Soul is Mine' in *Emily Jane Brontë: The Complete Poems,* Ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), p.182 (original) and pp.220-221 (Charlotte Edit).

Figure 4. Branwell Brontë, 'The Pillar Portrait' [Close-Up of Emily (right) and Anne (left)] (Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1834)

Charlotte's revisions are not only those of an admirer of Emily's style, but an editor who favours the religious sentiments in the verses above the veneration of the natural, in adherence to her more orthodox audience. Where Emily channels her mysticism in her depictions of 'Earth and moon' (l.21), Charlotte changes this to 'earth and man'. The moon, which is called upon persistently in Emily's poetry, is substituted for the more pragmatic 'mankind', ensuring God is the most significant presence in the poem. Charlotte wished for her sister to be remembered in this style insisting this to be Emily's last poem. Biographers since have emphasised that Charlotte was, as Janet Gezari infers, 'mistaken'[54] in this belief. However, these edits, as aforementioned, were completed in 1850, during which time Charlotte's anxieties over public perception of her sisters often overshadowed their original authorial intentions.

The concept of 'undying' and 'mighty' influences shown here in 'No Coward Soul' is seemingly referenced by Shirley herself who states: 'I will stay out here with my mother, Eve, in these days called Nature. I love her – undying, mighty being!' (184) *Shirley* demonstrates that Charlotte understood Emily's equal worship of God and his creation, prior to her 1850 edits of the poetry, accepting of both Shirley and Emily's descent from a 'mystical parent of (Shirley's) visions.' (184) Her preferred altar is not within the church, but with Nature herself amongst the moors, whose form of worship Shirley describes to Caroline:

> Nature is now at her evening prayers: she is kneeling before those red hills. I see her prostrate on the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair night for mariners at sea, for travellers in deserts, for lambs on moors, and unfledged birds in woods. Caroline, I see her! (163)

In poetry and prose, Emily and her characters conduct their clearest communication with the divine outdoors. Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights,* mourns Cathy amongst Nature, with Nelly

[54] Janet Gezari, Ed., *The Complete Poems,* note p.278.

describing how he kept watch over her coffin from the outside: 'I went and opened one of the windows; moved by his perseverance to give him a chance of bestowing on the faded image of his idol one final adieu.'[55] Later in the narrative, when he disturbs Cathy's grave, Mary Visick observes that Heathcliff will not be content until he is reunited with Cathy and nature:

> His final security is in the grave with her; he thinks even of the union of his "dissolved" body with hers. She is in the earth, the great mother; and she is also above and around him in spirit, his heaven-haven, his ultimate goal.[56]

Emily's interaction with her feminised interpretation of Nature creates a sense of female communication, which Charlotte intends to emulate in *Shirley* as a declaration of sisterly solidarity as well as feminine collaboration.

Readers must recall that Emily had not passed away until after the first volume of *Shirley* had been completed in September 1848, as Stoneman emphasises: 'it is not known how much of Volume II [Charlotte] had completed […] but the work was put aside as Emily sickened'.[57] Therefore, the draw to the juvenilia was not necessarily an emotional response, but an authorial dedication of admiration. Stoneman equally argues that, although Charlotte was driven by grief over Emily in Volumes Two and Three of *Shirley,* Volume One occurred 'only a month or two after the first reviews (of *Wuthering Heights)* appeared in December and January.'[58] Charlotte was experiencing 'indignation', not grief, at the critics' lack of admiration for her sister's novel.[59] Consequently, Charlotte becomes an avenging-author, embodying Emily's authorial themes in Shirley Keeldar. Critics have frequently considered the emotional legacy of Emily in *Shirley,* but rarely her textual influence. However, one can feel Emily's presence in Shirley's veneration of the natural world that surrounds her. Emily

[55] *Wuthering Heights,* p.140.
[56] Mary Visick, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights* (Stroud: Ian Hodgkins & Co., 1980), p.73.
[57] Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', p.25.
[58] Stoneman, p.26.
[59] Ibid.

Brontë has since become famous for her adoration of the Yorkshire moors, another reputation which Charlotte contributed to as she explains in her second preface to *Wuthering Heights*: 'My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side her mind could make Eden.'[60] Emily is remembered for her meditative writing style, encapsulated in poems such as 'Stars', as previously analysed in Chapter Two, where she describes the unceasing nature of the images in her mind: 'Thought followed thought, star followed star | Through boundless regions' (ll.13-14). Shirley is also a visionary, stating her intention to view the most overcast areas of Yorkshire as an earthly paradise in one interaction with Gerard Moore: 'I wish to live, not to die. The future opens up like Eden before me […] I see a vision that I like better than seraph or cherub glide across remote vistas.' (122) Like Emily before her, Shirley's imaginings are interrupted by reality, when Gerard responds to Shirley's seraphic dreams 'Pray, what vision?', Shirley is about to explain until her servant interrupts: '"I see-" The maid came bustling in with the tea things.' (122) This scene is evocative of Emily's 1834 diary paper: 'The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine Sally Mosely is washing in the back-Kitchin. [sic.]'[61] Shirley's devotion to her visions, and rejection of the material world, is a clear echo of Emily, as the narrator observes 'if she had been a writer' then Shirley possessed a 'flame of her intelligence (which) burned so vivid' (278) that she would fill 'half a sheet of paper' and set about 'mak(ing) earth an Eden, life a poem.' (223) Shirley's imagination is consistently compared to this fiery, divine imagery which is personified by 'that Seraph on earth named Genius.' (279) She continues throughout the narrative with a 'deep, inborn delight glow(ing) in her young veins' (223). The effervescent image of blistering heat and luminous inspiration is indicative of 'Stars', where Emily's narrator begs the stars to: 'return! And hide me from the hostile light, | That does not warm, but burn' (ll.43-44). The language is mimicked in Shirley's fear that the

[60] Charlotte Brontë, Preface to *Wuthering Heights,* xv.
[61] Emily Brontë diary paper, dated 24th November 1834, *A Life in Letters,* (.29-20), p.29.

intensity of her own feelings would cause her 'thus to burn out and perish, her living light doing no good, never seen, never needed – star in an else starless firmament' (278). Stars are indicative of divine inspiration and pressure in both Emily's poem and Shirley, the light in both representing its all-consuming power. Emily's narrator begs the higher powers of God and nature to have mercy on her: 'Let me sleep through this blinding reign | And only wake with you!' (ll.47-48). Shirley reads a meta-literary reference to this sentiment in a tutoring session with Louis Moore where the character 'Eva' – a euphemism for the Biblical Eve – offers her talent to 'That Presence, invisible but mighty, gather her in like a lamb to the fold; that voice, soft but all-pervading, vibrated through her heart like music.' (279) This sensation is present in many of Emily's poem, the aforementioned 'F. De Samara to A.G.A.' which reads: 'I have breathed my only wish in one last, one burning prayer […] That set on fire my heart, but froze upon my tongue' (ll.10-12). Again, Shirley seems to recite Emily's language: '"Shirley, how your eyes flash!", "Because my soul burns."' (154) Charlotte evidently felt herself a "scholar" of her sister, one who could recreate her 'Titan visions' (184). It was her knowledge of Emily's visionary style that led Charlotte to alter her Gondal poem 'Julian M. and A.G. Rochelle'[62] into 'The Visionary'[63] in her 1850 edits. A long verse dedicated to two Gondalian protagonists becomes one dedicated to Emily as Charlotte abruptly halts the poem after four verses and adds a final two:

> What I love shall come like visitant of air,
>
> Safe in secret power from lurking human snare; (ll.13-14)
>
> […] Burn, then, little lamp; glimmer straight and clear – (l.17)
>
> […] Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my constancy. (l.20)

In *Shirley,* Charlotte personifies what she believed to be the most significant aspects of Emily's imagination, as embodied above: sounds; secret and divine power; fire and constancy. Shirley is in need of 'the obscure whisper, which have haunted (me) from

[62] *Complete Poems,* pp.177-181.
[63] *Complete Poems,* p.218.

childhood' to be 'interpreted' (279), and Stoneman explains that her author grants this in the form of Louis Moore who 'becomes just such an "interpreter" for Shirley, standing "between her and the world".'[64] Stoneman references Charlotte's belief that '[a]n interpreter ought always to have stood between [Emily] and the world'.[65] As Moore is Shirley's interpreter, Charlotte is Emily's, encapsulating her authorial energy in her novel, whilst equally paying Emily the greatest compliment she could personally offer another writer: that she fully utilises her God-given talents.

If Charlotte was attempting to accentuate her sister's character, William Michael was struggling to contain his brother's legacy. His now deceased brother's Romantic reputation was enticing female fanatics to his graveside, as Roe reminds us: '[t]he cemetery keeper at Birchington noticed increasing numbers of female pilgrims to the painter-poet's gravesite, one of whom swooned beside the unmarked turf'.[66] With the death of Dante Gabriel came the cessation of scandal which surrounded the dissolute Pre-Raphaelites, his fans starved of art and stories. Therefore, as discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, when it came time for William to write his brother's biography, people wanted romance. As Bullen argues, after Dante Gabriel's death, people were left aware of his 'erotic life […] together with his drug abuse and his emotional problems'[67]. Hall Caine recounts the worst vices of Dante Gabriel's life, which he states were detailed in the *Daily News* after his death:

> as that great curse of the literary and artistic temperament, insomnia, had been hanging about him since the death of his wife, and was becoming each year more and more alarming. He had tried opiates, but in sparing quantities, for had he not the most serious cause to eschew them?[68]

[64] Stoneman, p.30.
[65] Charlotte Brontë, 'Biographical Notice', p.xiii.
[66] Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland,* 323.
[67] Bullen, p.258.
[68] Hall Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882), p.48.

The later fragility of the tortured poet and painter seemed fit for a penny-dreadful, and suddenly the poet who wrote so eloquently of death and its consequent reunion with the muse, had "achieved" both. Both Dante Gabriel and Lizzie Siddall were gone, and the Pre-Raphaelite who 'dared to push back some of the barriers'[69], seemed able to transcend death itself with his reputation. However, William Michael declines the readers' wish to expand upon the pre-existing gossip, as we witnessed in Chapter Four, with his refusal to "repeat" the more scandalous stories. In *His Family-Letters* he includes the caveat 'I have left untold what I do not choose to tell, if you want more, be pleased to consult some other informant' (xii). His belligerent protestations towards the more fanatical reader does not seem conducive to book-sales, however, one must consider how the circumstances which led to the memoir may have shaped his tone. Like Charlotte, William Michael was also forced to endure a disheartening sequence of deaths in his immediate family and friendship circles. His second volume of *Reminiscences* contains an entire chapter dedicated to 'Deaths in the Family: Dante, Frances, Lucy, And Christina Rossetti, And Others'.[70] Having lost Gabriele in 1854 and Maria in 1876, William Michael describes the succession of events which led to his only-child status as a prolonged period of suffering. In the midst of Christina's final illness William Michael struggled to continue with any form of labour: 'I did little in the nature of steady work, apart from attending to some business arising under the will of my wife.'[71] In a style reminiscent of Charlotte's own coping strategies, William Michael 'resolved to bring these desultory ways to a conclusion and to set at something definite.'[72] Geographical and monetary blessings favour the Rossettis again as William Michael ensured the ailing Christina's comfort with his own frequent visits and two nurses to tend to her, whilst William Michael intriguingly sought diversion from one family tragedy by recalling another. Yet it was

[69] Bullen, *Painter and Poet,* p.258.
[70] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.515.
[71] Ibid., pp.553-554.
[72] Ibid. p.554.

not *death* he was trying to recreate in the biography but his brother's life, more particularly, his childhood.

The Brontës discovered much sooner just how literature and writing could be used as a method of communicating with the dead through their mother's relics but, although he had read of such methods in his brother's seminal 'The Blessed Damozel', William Michael would soon learn the cathartic power of this practice. In *His Family-Letters,* he ponders over having to sort through Frances Rossetti's possessions following her death, detailing how he happened upon a small red writing-case, given by Dante Gabriel - or 'Dante Rossetti' as William Michael refers to him (24) - assuring those readers that demanded to read about Dante Gabriel that he was not deviating from the memoir's original purpose in his mourning. William Michael informs the readers that this case contained verses of Frances' own composition, all dated 1876, the year Maria died. He is aware that this poem is substantially less meaningful to his audience - many of whom most likely had never heard of Maria Rossetti - but specifies that these poems were significant 'to me' (24). One of Frances' poems laments the loss of her parents, sister, husband and finally Maria: 'dear Daughter sore I miss | My dearest Dodo and her kiss'. Again, conceding the unimportance of these poems to the predetermined Dante Gabriel plan, William Michael writes: '[p]erhaps the reader will think it ridiculous that I should print them' (24). However, he still attempts to recapture the Dante Gabriel fanatic's attention by accentuating the final lines of the poem, which were added later in 1882 after the death of Dante Gabriel. They read as follows: 'I never more shall hear him speak, | The dearly loved who called me "Tique"'. "Tique" or "antique" - William tells us - was Dante Gabriel's nickname for Frances (FT, 24). The fact that Frances kept these poems in her private writing-case, and William Michael's own admission that Frances was an extremely guarded person (24), indicates that they were never meant to be seen. There is a freedom to write sentimentally when one does not expect one's work to be read, especially not by critics, but her open tone seems to resonate with William Michael and

influence his own writing. The fact that Frances was provoked by the loss of Maria to contemplate the deaths of her husband and sisters, most likely resonated with the widowed William Michael, proof to *His Family-Letters* readership that grief can often lead to the most honest writing styles. It is intriguing that Frances adds to this poem upon the death of her eldest son nearly a decade later, returning to it with a view to adding Dante Gabriel's name to a list of those she had lost.

Memory shapes the present, and vice versa, for all the Rossettis. If Frances' own circumstances were so similar to William Michael's that he felt he could empathise with her poetry, it is feasible that he equally chose to emulate her methods to console his own struggles. Their end-goals in writing their respective pieces are certainly similar; in adding Dante Gabriel to her lamenting poem, Frances is reuniting her lost loved ones on the page, not only with herself, but with each other. In placing them in a literary context, Frances is fusing a posthumous creative connection, as William Michael also intended with his deceased co-authors. Moreover, Frances creates childlike and literal written echoes of her family by placing their respective nicknames for herself in speech marks, as though the deceased were speaking to her - highly reminiscent of 'The Blessed Damozel' in this respect. Only in immersing herself in nostalgic speech and sentiment, can Frances recollect her family as she wished. William Michael mimics this often naive writing style, delving into tremendous detail in places concerning inconsequential childhood anecdotes. This thesis has previously utilised these stories told by William Michael to create a more three-dimensional portrait of his brother[73], however, the two arguably most childish reminiscences of his brother relate to animals. William Michael recalls how the young Dante Gabriel was given a dormouse christened "Dwanging" by him, which he allowed to hibernate in a drawer when winter came. We must allow for his young age - although William Michael does not state

[73] For instance, the 'Skelt Characters' anecdote in Chapter Two of this thesis, and the 'Rocking-Horse' tale in Chapter Four.

explicitly how old Dante Gabriel was at the time - however it is indisputable that this story worthy of children's literature does not fit the rakish Pre-Raphaelite mould Dante Gabriel fashioned for himself. This recollection is followed by another - one of misbehaviour which seems more suited to the "DGR" label - in which Dante Gabriel adopted a hedgehog, only to proceed to feed it beer. In spite of the mischievous tone of this story, William Michael assures the reader 'at no period in his (Dante Gabriel's) life did he relish the sight of anything repellent or degrading.' (38) William Michael depicts a wholly innocent child. Potentially, the sensible William Michael was attempting to "correct" his brother's ungentlemanly persona by recalling more palatable scenes from an innocent childhood. However, William Michael simultaneously inserts himself and his sisters within the origins of his brother's artistic education, reasserting the familial connection which inspired his brother's creativity. In doing so, William Michael was recalling the now irretrievable literary connections between the siblings, as well as showing the public a more sympathetic portrayal of the artist. It was an image only he, with the death of his siblings, could now offer the public: '[n]o one now alive perhaps, except myself, could, with any clear knowledge' (74) show this early persona to Dante Gabriel's fans. In his emotional state, William Michael offers a rare insight into his brother's early years, yet he simultaneously risks damaging how Dante Gabriel would have wished to be remembered.

Thy Brother's Blood Crieth: "Corrective" Custodians and the Memory of the Brother

Evidently, the secret to a successful family memorial was to forge a biographer's armour. William Michael found authorial conviction in the knowledge that he was the sole writer who held these memories, thus making his reminiscences exclusive above all others. Conversely, the private Charlotte kept the public from scrutinising too closely, empowered by the shield of Currer Bell. She could emulate her family and their fiction without her reader being aware. Caroline Helstone, for instance, echoes the censure of the Bells' critics: 'learned

professions, they say, make women masculine, coarse, unwomanly.' (229) All adjectives used to describe each Bell brother in turn, as Juliet Gardiner reminds us, with 'reviewers' charges of "coarseness", "brutality" and, "morbid revelling in scenes of debauchery"'.[74] When writing of Charlotte as a surviving sibling, critics and biographers tend to focus on and, incidentally, disparage Charlotte's custodianship of her siblings' works. John Sutherland, for example, cites Charlotte's infamous "editorial bonfire" in which she burned Branwell's novel (based upon Mrs. Robinson) and Anne's unsuccessful poetry[75] and possibly Emily's second novel[76], as an example of Charlotte's ruthlessness towards her sisters' works. However, when Charlotte began *Shirley,* she still had her sisters' support in the face of criticism:

> The *North American Review* is worth reading – there is no mincing the matter there – what a bad set the Bells must be! […] I studied the two ferocious authors. Ellis the "man of uncommon talents but dogged, brutal and morose,' sat leaning back in his easy chair […] he smiled half-amused and half in scorn […] Acton was sewing, no emotion ever stirs him to loquacity, so he only smiled too.[77]

Therefore, *Shirley* still largely contains this sense of incredulity, with Robert Moore even describing Caroline as 'walk(ing) invisible' (146), a light-hearted reference to Charlotte's preferred mode of publishing as Currer Bell: 'What author would be without the advantage of being able to walk invisible?'[78] However, increasing access to the Brontës' wider writing means that Emily's presence is becoming progressively visible in *Shirley.* Although the Emily/Shirley parallels are the most widely explored by critics, she is not the sole sibling whose juvenilia-style is imitated in *Shirley.* Charlotte uses the character of Shirley to applaud

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[74] Juliet Gardiner, *The World Within: The Brontës at Haworth (A Life in Letters, Diaries and Writings)* (London: Collins & Brown Ltd, 1992), p.129.
[75] "Unsuccessful" according to Charlotte's views, not Sutherland's.
[76] A letter from Thomas Cautley Newby, publisher, to Emily Brontë (as Ellis Bell), dated 15th February 1848 implies Emily was working on a second novel: 'I am much obliged by your kind note & shall have great pleasure in making arrangements for your next novel.' in *A Life in Letters,* p.183. For further reading please refer to Sarah Fermi, 'Emily's Second Novel', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.42, Issue 4, (2017) pp.304-311.
[77] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith Williams, dated 22nd November 1848, *A Life in Letters,* (212-213), p.213.
[78] Charlotte Brontë letter to William Smith Williams, dated 4th January 1848, *A Life in Letters,* p.177.

Emily's full use of her talents. Equally, through the locations and characters of the novel, she laments, and even mocks, Branwell's neglect of his own faculties.

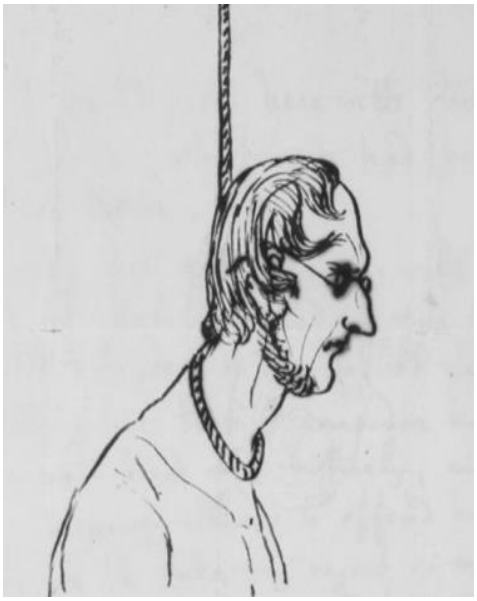

Figure 5. Branwell Brontë, 'Patrick Reid "turned off", without his cap' [Close-Up], Reverse of a Letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland (Property of Leeds University Library, January 1848)
Figure 6. Branwell Brontë, 'Self-Portrait', (The Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1840)

The initial reviews of *Shirley* were the beginning of Charlotte's authorial anxieties as a result of reading unflattering appraisals of her work, without her sisters' reassurance. Many critics openly confessed to not having read past the first few chapters, with one from the *Atlas* declaring: 'The first chapter of *Shirley* is enough to deter many a reader from advancing a step further than the threshold'.[79] Another from the *Daily News* stated: 'Like people who put […] monsters to keep their gates, or ugly dogs to deter idle folk from entering, so doth this writer manage to have an opening chapter or two of the most deterring kind'.[80] The term "deter" was expressed frequently in *Shirley's* reviews, specifically when describing the commencing chapters which depict a large gathering of young male curates, indulging in alcohol-abuse and expressing chauvinistic and unsympathetic opinions: 'The curates, meantime, sat and sipped their wine, a liquor of unpretending vintage [...] Mr Malone,

[79] 'Review of *Shirley', The Atlas* (3rd November 1848), *A Life in Letters*, (248-249), p.249.
[80] 'Review of *Shirley*', *The Daily News* (31st October 1849), *A Life in Letters,* p.247.

indeed, would much rather have had whisky.' (6) In attempting to depict fraternity and laddish humour, the critics believed Charlotte was describing the most incendiary and destructive aspects of masculinity and that she should 'discipline of her own tumultuous energies. She must learn also to sacrifice a little of her Yorkshire roughness'.[81] The harshness of *Shirley's* critical reception led Charlotte to write a defence to her publisher: 'In delineating male character, I labour under disadvantages'[82]. Charlotte is not solely referring to the "disadvantage" of being a female author writing about young men, but also the fact that she was operating from 'the place of observation'. As Robert G. Collins observes, the most attention-demanding man in her life who she could 'observe' to help flesh-out these men was her tormented '[g]ood old Branwell…or, more significantly, bad young Branwell.'[83] The 'the wreck of talent, the ruin of promise'[84] Charlotte witnessed in Branwell, and his steady descent into addiction, were at the forefront of her mind when she began writing *Shirley*. Branwell's mind and body were slowly deteriorating[85] during the time Charlotte was conceiving *Shirley*, and his writings during this period foreshadow Branwell's eventual end, encapsulated in his infamous suicidal sketch 'Patrick Reid "turned off without his cap". [Fig.5.] Conceivably the most famous of Branwell's sketches, it is certainly the 'grimmest self-portrait'.[86] The Patrick Reid sketch is scrawled on the back of a letter to his drinking companion and fellow artist, Joseph Bentley Leyland, and imagines Branwell, as Alexander and Sellers note, 'with a rope noose around his neck. He is naked and his lined face looks downward and his glasses seem to have been blacked out like a blindfold.'[87] The vulnerability of the image is not lessened by the fact this is supposedly a sketch of Reid, as implied by the title, who was executed in 1848 for murder. However, Patrick Reid

[81] G. H. Lewes, 'Review of *Shirley*', *The Edinburgh Review* (January 1850), *A Life in Letters* (260-261), p.261.
[82] Charlotte Brontë letter to James Taylor, dated 1st March 1849, *A Life in Letters* (225-226), p.226.
[83] Robert G. Collins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold: Retrieving the Prose Chronicles', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol. 21, Issue 6 (1996) (253-259), p.253.
[84] Charlotte to WSW, letter dated 29th September 1848, *A Life in Letters,* (208-209), p.209.
[85] Aggravated by the debauched lifestyle detailed in Chapter Four of this thesis.
[86] Collins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold: Retrieving the Prose Chronicles', p.253.
[87] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.361.

remarkably resembles Patrick Branwell's depictions of himself with his aquiline nose, beard, curly auburn hair and glasses. [Fig.6.] The drawing is a reflection of Branwell's own depression, a state of dejection which Charlotte would have witnessed since Branwell had returned to the Brontë Parsonage by this point. This sketch and the accompanying letter which expresses Branwell's being 'broken down and embittered in heart' was completed towards the end of January in 1848. By February, Charlotte was writing the opening chapters with the self-destructive curates and their 'ongoings […] merely photographed from [the] life.'[88] In fact, Charlotte's chapters are heavily reminiscent of Branwell's own 'photograph' of a scene with his friends at the Talbot public house, beneath the 'Patrick Reid' sketch. [Fig. 7.]

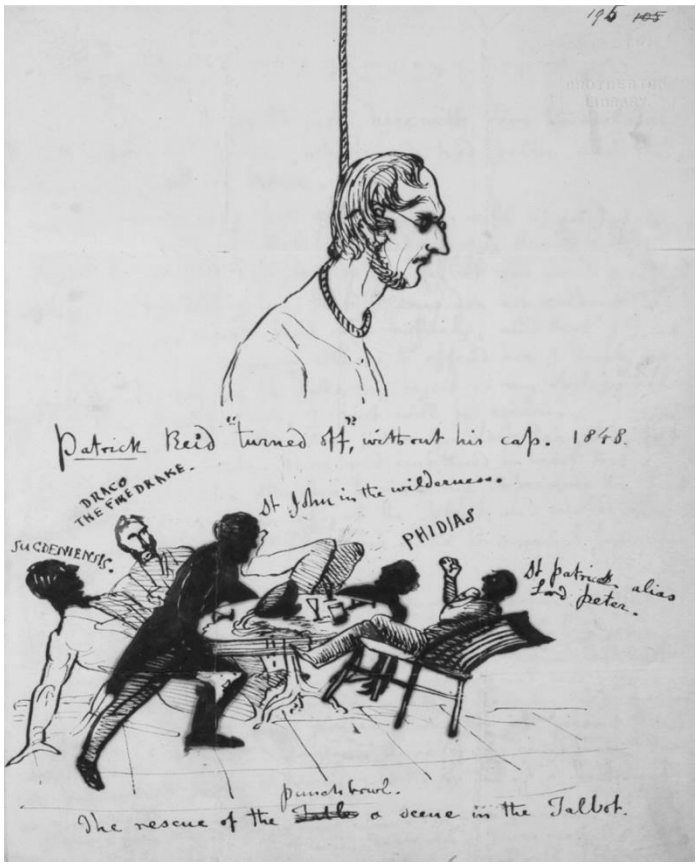

Figure 7. Branwell Brontë, 'Patrick Reid "turned off", without his cap', Reverse of a Letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland (Property of Leeds University Library, January 1848)

[88] Charlotte to WSW, 2nd March 1849, in *A Life in Letters,* p.226.

The letter on the reverse of these scenes reads as an apology to Leyland as Branwell attempts to excuse his previous behaviour at the Talbot: 'I was not intoxicated when I saw you last, Dear Sir, but I was so much broken down and embittered in heart that it did not need much extra stimulus to make me experience the fainting fit I had'.[89] From our long-standing public perception of Branwell, described by Collins, as 'a muttering, hollow-eyed wraith standing in the doorway of the Black Bull'[90], we find his claims of sobriety difficult to believe, especially when we examine this caricature of his and his companions' behaviour in his sketch 'The rescue of the table punchbowl a scene in the Talbot [sic.]' [Fig. 7.] This raucous scene apparently depicts what Alexander and Sellers refer to as, 'a drunken scene with four men collapsing around a circular pedestal stable set on a tiled floor. As they fall off their chairs a silhouetted figure rushes forward to steady the toppling punchbowl.'[91] Note the strange use of religious monikers with which Branwell christens each of his friends including "St. Patrick" and the punchbowl's rescuer "St John, in the wilderness". Shamefacedly, Branwell gives himself, and his friends, respectable names in order to increase the boorishness of the alcoholism depicted as each man fights to rescue their punchbowl from spilling off the almost upturned table. The camaraderie is almost laddish, but by giving the figures these names the image becomes blasphemous. Charlotte mimics this sacrilegious tone in the opening chapters of *Shirley*. The scene opens entirely surrounded by young men, curates, acting below their vocation in drunken revelry: 'They swallowed, (too), a tolerable allowance of "flat beer"' (5), wine and whiskey are also mentioned as the men seem determined to immerse themselves in gluttony. Charlotte refers to these men as 'the curates' throughout this opening chapter, consistently drawing attention to their vocation and, therefore, how much more civilised they should be. Blessed with education and

[89] Branwell Brontë letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated January 1848, [Letter 21], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/21 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[90] Collins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold: Retrieving the Prose Chronicles', p.253.
[91] Alexander and Sellars, *Art of the Brontës,* pp.361-362.

security, we have higher expectations of these men, and clearly, so too does the narrator explaining:

> While they (the curates) sipped they argued, not on politics, nor on philosophy, nor on literature – not even on theology, practical or doctrinal, but on minute points […] frivolities which seemed empty as bubbles to all save themselves. (6)

The emphasis upon how these men should be conducting themselves is conceivably a comment on Branwell and his friends squandering their training and talent: 'These gentlemen are in the bloom of youth; they possess activity of that interesting age' (4), yet their promise is diminished. These boisterous curates resemble Branwell's letter to Leyland increasingly, with Charlotte even referring to these men by the same holy nicknames Branwell gives his companions: 'You could not have guessed by looking at any one of them (the curates) that the Italian-ironed double frills of its net-cap surrounded the brows of a preordained, specially-sanctified successor of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. John.' (3) Charlotte even channels the landlady named in Branwell's missive in the form of the Talbot's Mrs. Gale. Branwell, after excusing his behaviour at the Talbot, asks that Leyland apologise to landlady Mrs. Sugden on his behalf: 'if I did anything, during temporary illness, to offend her I deeply regret it, and beg her to take my regret as my apology.'[92] He acknowledges his behaviour towards Sugden but only half-apologises for what this 'motherly' woman was made to tolerate. Charlotte parodies a similar lack of appreciation towards Mrs. Gale who 'does not believe one of them to be a real gentleman […] "The old parsons is worth the whole lump of college lads; they know what belongs to good manners, and is kind to high and low."' (5) While Charlotte openly mocks her brother's activities, there is an underlying elegy for the lost capabilities of her former co-author. Through these intoxicated curates, as well as the no-nonsense tone of *Shirley* itself, Charlotte warns her readers against expecting too much from those who seemingly have greater opportunities than oneself: 'Calm your expectations;

[92] Branwell Brontë letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated January 1848, [Letter 21], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/21 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).

reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool and solid lies before you: something unromantic as Monday morning.' (3)

Equally, the ever-pragmatic William Michael was deconstructing the romanticised image of "Dante Gabriel Rossetti". Although the inclusion of the childish anecdotes previously discussed do not fuel the Pre-Raphaelite persona, as some readers may have expected from a memoir, they do not necessarily damage it. While these stories are not conducive to the sensual reputation Dante Gabriel had forged for himself over his career, a true Rossetti admirer would purchase a biography in search of information as yet unknown about the well-renowned artist. These recollections of childhood and home-life certainly provide just that. The exclusivity of William Michael's position as both biographer and brother, emphasised by him throughout his 'eye-witness' accounts of Dante Gabriel's boyhood, would surely fuel sales. While William Michael felt compelled to apologise for his selection of stories throughout the memoir, he had not yet altered the public perception of 'DGR' beyond repair. However, as *His Family-Letters* continues, William Michael increasingly calls into question those aspects upon with Dante Gabriel constructed his 'second self': his rakish public persona explored in Chapter Four of this thesis. Unlike William Michael's previous reluctance to assist in the sensationalising of his brother, such as his refusal to dramatize his relationships with his models, in *His Family-Letters* he openly disputes the sense-of-self which had helped solidify Dante Gabriel's career. William Michael was threatening to deconstruct the concept of his brother as Dante Alighieri reincarnate. It was a concept that Dante Gabriel's Pre-Raphaelite image had underscored, his professional name being entirely Dante-esque. Stressing his filial connection to Gabriele Rossetti, the Romantic exile, poet and Dante scholar, together with the famous rearranging of his birth name "Gabriel Charles Dante" to "Dante Gabriel" he was drawing focus to the Dante connection. Moreover, the most celebrated subject matters of his art were inspired by Dante Alighieri's own life as well as his *Divine Comedy,* with his renowned model and wife Elizabeth being moulded as a newfound

Beatrice in life and death. [Fig.8.] However, we must ask if we can truly declare Elizabeth Siddall "immortalised" in art if we predominantly remember her in death.

Siddal's public afterlife carries with it a particular instance of notoriety, one which would guarantee her celebrity widower would be discussed for years to come, the desecration of her grave in 1869. Dante Gabriel biographer Hall Caine recalls the event as follows:

> Rossetti had buried the only complete copy of his poems [*House of Life*] with his wife at Highgate, and for a time he had been able to put by the thought of them; but as one by one his friends […] attained to distinction as poets, he began to hanker after poetic reputation, and to reflect with pain and regret upon the hidden fruits of his best effort. […] Rossetti had both affection enough to do it [bury the poems] and weakness enough to have it undone.[93]

This grave-robbing tale became so integral to the DGR "myth" that William Michael could not evade mentioning it in his 1896 editorial preface to Christina's "tale for girls": *Maude*. The eponymous Maude as her life draws to a close, asks her cousin Agnes to make sure she be buried with her book of poems, so her mother may never read the supposedly "impious" and sensual poems contained within. William Michael's introduction describes this depiction as 'curious' given how it appears to be 'an unconscious prefigurement [sic.] of a well-known and much-discussed incident in the life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.'[94] The scandal refused to dwindle out of public consciousness, and William Michael had to address it in *His Family-Letters.* He approaches the moment when Dante Gabriel placed the poems in the coffin reluctantly, beginning with simply stating: 'I remember the incident.' (224) He recollects how his brother's mentor Madox Brown applied to William Michael to convince his brother not to inter the manuscript with Siddall, to which he replied: 'Well, the feeling does him honour, and let him do as he likes.' (225) Thus William Michael attempts to alleviate the reader's

[93] Hall Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882), p.59.
[94] William Michael Rossetti, Ed. *Maude: A Story for Girls* by Christina Rossetti (London: James Bowden, 1897), pp.x-xi.

horror that Dante Gabriel would come to desecrate this resting place, by emphasising Dante Gabriel's grief-stricken state, in the hopes of eliciting sympathy. William Michael even depicts the placing of the poems within the coffin as a selfless act: 'The sacrifice was no doubt a grave one. Rossetti thus not only renounced any early or definite hopes of poetic fame, which had always been a ruling passion with him' (225). It was a perception which carried through to William Michael's own daughter's Dante Gabriel biography, where Helen Rossetti describes the "sacrifice", and subsequent retrieval, as a 'gesture of love […] vainly seeking a contact beyond the grave'.[95] However, William Michael continues to depict Dante Gabriel as both a widower, and a grieving poet lamenting the loss of his manuscript.

The first volume of *His Family-Letters* contents page, within the chapter 'Preparations for Publishing Poems', William Michael promises his audience that he will discuss the incident. However, he simply summarises the event as '[t]he unburying [sic.] of the MS. Deposited in his wife's coffin.' (p.xxx) The lack of adornment or excuse not only demonstrates William Michael's reticence to discuss it, but how widely the incident was known, not feeling the need to explain any further, the Rossetti admirer will know to which 'MS.' he is referring. In the contents page William Michael also bookends the event with Dante Gabriel's '[a]lleged impulse towards suicide' and his 'habits as to drinking', attempting to assuage his brother of some blame before even discussing the grave-disturbance. Accordingly, William Michael begins his account of the scandal by distributing some blame onto his fellow Pre-Raphaelites: 'For some while past some friends had urged Rossetti to recover the MS. buried in his wife's coffin, and thus to obtain possession.'[96] (274) He depicts his brother as initially repulsed by the ideal, having 'hung back for a while', nevertheless 'ultimately he assented.' (274)

[95] Helen Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p.204.

[96] 'I cannot say with precision who these friends were.' William Michael explains, 'The facts seem to mark Mr. Henry Virtue Tebbs (John Seddon's brother-in-law), who was then a Proctor at Doctors' Commons, and Mr. Charles Augustus Howell, as prominent among them.' *His Family-Letters,* Vol.1., p.274.

William Michael is insinuating that the exhumation was not Dante Gabriel's idea and stresses that he did not undertake that act lightly. As an editor he applauds Dante Gabriel for reviving his MS., which included his celebrating poem 'Jenny', and as a brother he supports his decisions: 'I have been treating this matter with great plainness, and openly showing that, in my opinion, my brother's feeling and his line of action, in relation to public criticism, were other than they should have been.' (277) He not only absolves Dante Gabriel of some charges, but asserts that readers and admirers should not importune him for any further details: 'The subject, in all its bearings, is a painful one, and I shall not dilate upon it. […] I have no sort of recollection of the exact steps which were taken' (277). William Michael's diary note of 11th October 1869 recounts the plot: 'This is skilful scheming; but for my own part (as I told Gabriel) I would not diplomatize at all, but just leave the book to take its chance, and feel pretty confident of the result into the bargain.' (277) Clearly, he is determined to lay the matter to rest, and improve Dante Gabriel's legacy. Helen Angeli Rossetti depicts her father as experiencing some discomfort how inextricable Siddall and Beatrice, or more specifically their premature deaths and "resurrections", had become from his family's own:

> One visualises [Siddal] as Beatrice in a Death-Trance, *Beata Beatrix* [Fig.8.] […] we think of her on her death-bed, unresponsive to her husband's touch and despairing words of love, so utterly at rest that William [Michael] could not dissociate her from Dante's vision of Beatrice: And with her was such very humbleness | That she appeared to say "I am at peace".[97]

It is a testament to how successful Dante Gabriel had been in "marketing" himself as Dante Alighieri reincarnate during his career, aided, Waldman argues, by his being 'consistently focused on the details of Dante's vision'.[98] Dante's eschatological apparition was led by the

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[97] Rossetti Angeli, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies,* p.186.
Rossetti Angeli mentions *Beata Beatrix* for further discussion of this painting and how it contributed to the "DGR" myth, please refer to Chapter Four of this thesis.
[98] Waldman, *The Demon & The Damozel,* p.69.

death of the Beloved. William Michael was evidently uncomfortable that the final years of his brother's career were driven further to the detriment of Siddal.[99] Thirlwell believes this could be an extension of William Michael's own resentment that he was 'still working for Dante Gabriel, even after his death'.[100] Regardless, William Michael attempts to mitigate Dante Gabriel's flawed reputation with women, specifically his not leaving Siddall to rest, by stressing the "proto-feminist" art he supposedly completed following her death. Between Siddal's death in 1862 and her exhumation in 1869, he argues 'my brother's powers—though somewhat less developed than they afterwards became in the direction of abstract style—were truly at their best' (238). These 'masterpieces' included arguably the most famous portrait of Christina Rossetti[101] and his designs for her collection *The Princes Progress,* but William Michael claims '[n]othing that my brother produced was, to my mind, more thoroughly satisfactory than the *Joan of Arc*' (239). [Fig.8.] It cannot be a coincidence that William Michael was drawing his reader's attention to Dante Gabriel's less celebrated, and yet less chauvinistic, works, including their innovative sister and a Patron Saint – whom Frances Rossetti had previously christened 'the most extra-ordinary female character ever recorded in history'[102] in *Hodge-Podge.*[103] William Michael was facing a significant issue faced by the surviving siblings: how to discuss a sibling's work when the kin in question is no longer there to join forces, declaring that only he, as a brother, could offer such a unique biography, amalgamating public and private image. Yet he did collaborate, as we see in his

[99] Of course, William Michael also accentuated his role as the sole living person who knew Dante Gabriel from childhood by stating that the over-emphasis of Alighieri's influence on his brother is perpetuated 'by writers who know nothing very definite about the matter'. (*His Family-Letters,* 63) When we consider the lengths Dante Gabriel went to alter himself in Alighieri's image throughout his career, it seems William Michael is not adhering to the legacy his brother aimed to create for himself. The readers now knew Dante Gabriel was not born an Alighieri apprentice, nor did he believe the Florentine master to even be an enjoyable read. I argue William Michael did this, not to mar the legacy of his brother, but to mark Dante Gabriel's talents as equal to, and distinct from, Dante Alighieri – an editorial decision he also exercised in Gabriele's *Versified Autobiography* – please see Chapter Two of this thesis for a reading of how William Michael achieved this.

[100] Thirlwell, *The Other Rossettis,* p.174.

[101] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Christina Rossetti' (Private Collection, 1866). Please see: *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s429.raw.html> [accessed 5th June 2016]

[102] Frances Rossetti, *Hodge-Podge* (Facsimiles) MS. Facs. c.95 (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford)

[103] As noted in Chapter One of this thesis.

utilisation of Dante Gabriel's role as illustrator for Christina – as well as painter of his mother's favoured saints – that William Michael would learn to use the sanctified images of the Rossetti women to repair any male shortcomings.

Figure 8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Joan of Arc Kissing the Sword of Deliverance' (Musée des Beaux Arts de Strasbourg, 1863)

Public and private pressures also mounted for Charlotte when the burden of having to recreate the success of *Jane Eyre* loomed as she began *Shirley,* to the extent that she considered returning to her first novel *The Professor,* which had been rejected by multiple publishers. However, when she attempted to rework the manuscript, Charlotte found 'the beginning very feeble, the whole narrative deficient in incident'[104], hence it seems she retreated further into her early writings, back to her and Branwell's Angrian tales. The siblings' juvenile kingdom was an early attempt to capture what Lesa Scholl describes as the 'voices of the literary market'[105], as such, Charlotte potentially related to her earlier self and endeavoured to follow the trend of the 'social-awareness'[106] novel. Equally, it is feasible that her desire to "escape" the Parsonage and her siblings' illnesses led Charlotte to revert to the

[104] Charlotte to WSW, dated 14th December 1847, *A Life in Letters* (173-174), p.173.
[105] Lesa Scholl, 'Charlotte Brontë's Polyphonic Voices: Collaboration and Hybrid Authorial Spaces', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 39. No. 4. (November 2014), (279-91), p.281.
[106] Scholl, 'Charlotte Brontë's Polyphonic Voices: Collaboration and Hybrid Authorial Spaces', p.281.

early nineteenth-century timeline of her juvenilia. Consequently, *Shirley* is set in the midst of both the Napoleonic Wars and the Luddite Rebellion, the former being a foundational dynamic of Charlotte and Branwell's childhood kingdom, notably the Wellington/Napoleon conflict which is also referenced in *Shirley*: 'Mr Moore began to tell us about the Continent, the war, and Bonaparte – subjects we were both fond of listening to.' (281) These "subjects" are the same which founded Angria, which Butcher explains were 'constructed from the personalities of and antagonism between the real-life Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte, reimagining a relationship between two military giants.'[107] Where Angria would inflate these historical images to create, as Butcher identifies, a 'long-running narrative that principally concerned itself with war and hosted a number of soldierly, masculine characters'[108]; *Shirley* takes the Angrian aesthetic and saturates it with moral commentary.

We have previously discussed the sanctimonious tone of *Shirley* in relation to reprimanding Branwell's later behaviour. Charlotte does not, however, solely disparage Branwell, but stresses how much his talent was under threat from his lifestyle. In their youth, if Charlotte or Branwell felt the other was losing focus from their writing, as Chapters Three and Four of this thesis illustrate, a dramatic shift in the narrative had to occur to startle their co-author back to attention.[109] *Shirley,* as an elegy for Branwell's lost talent, is no exception. Charlotte not only attacks Branwell's addictive personality in *Shirley,* the very landscape of Angria is both mirrored and deconstructed amongst the Yorkshire mills. Angria was never too far removed from the familiar moors of Yorkshire, described in 'Caroline' as a kingdom of 'clustered chimneys towering'[110], and the abundance of mills and 'ancestral halls' are heavily recalled in *Shirley.* This theme of an 'ancestral hall', a source of home and history which must

[107] Emma Butcher, 'War Trauma and Alchoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* 22:4 (465-481), p.465
[108] Ibid., p.465.
[109] Consider Branwell's 'murder of the duchess' discussed in Chapter Three, or Charlotte's 'taming of Northanglerand' in 'The Green Dwarf' in Chapter Four.
[110] Branwell Brontë, 'Caroline', *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), (66-76).

be protected at all costs is reiterated throughout Branwell's Angria poetry. 'Caroline' commences as follows: 'The light of thy ancestral hall, | Thy Caroline, no longer smiles', while 'Lines (Now Heavily in the Clouds)' reads: 'Sang, no oer mills [sic.], but round ancestral Halls, | And 'stead of engines steam gave dews from waterfalls'[111] (ll.54-55). Similarly, Shirley's home of Fieldhead is described as an 'ancestral hall' surrounded by a 'thick, lofty stack of chimneys' (15). The presence of such Mills is not unusual as *Shirley* is set amongst the industrial moors of Yorkshire, and Angria was also an amalgamation between exotic foreign climes and the Brontës' home. [112] Nevertheless, echoes of the shared kingdom of Angria continue as *Shirley* embodies Branwell's favourite motifs of war and its subsequent traumas. While Charlotte's Angrian tales were primarily concerned with specific moments in the story, Branwell forged a linear narrative of battlefield experience, including surprisingly sensitive and astute depictions post-traumatic stress. Even at a very young age, Branwell knew that soldiers returning from war would have to find coping strategies, and he believed the most effective distraction could be found in alcohol.[113] As such, the alcoholism depicted in *Shirley* may not be solely derived from her brother's later addictions, but from their shared Angrian characters. If the setting of *Shirley* echoes their shared fascination with the Napoleonic Wars, we can argue the novel's depictions of addiction were equally inspired by these early writings. As with Emily's Gondal poetry, Charlotte mimics Branwell's Angrian writings with a tone of professional respect, and elegises the works which Branwell might have completed.

In *Shirley,* there is one character named Mike Hartley who is highly reminiscent of her and Branwell's soldiers from their juvenilia. Mike, we are told, was once a soldier and talks of 'seeing visions' from his time of a battlefield. These violent mirages pervade the opening

[111] Branwell Brontë, 'Lines (Now Heavily in the Clouds)' *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), (221-22).
[112] As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, as well as Robert G. Collins' *The Hand of the Arch Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993),which states that Charlotte and Branwell's early writing turn 'Angria into England, Africa into the contesting powers of p.xiv.
[113] The theme of alcohol-abuse in Branwell Brontë's juvenilia, and how the young writer perceives this practice, is considered in Chapter Four of this thesis.

chapters: ‘he heard what he thought was a band at a distance - bugles, fifes, and the sound of trumpet [...] he wondered that there should be music there.’ (12) The images charge at him, 'red, like poppies, or white, like may blossom'; a possible reference to their Regency uniforms as he "witness" 'bloodshed and civil conflict' until he 'he saw them no more’ (13). The images are heavily reminiscent of Branwell post-traumatic writings, especially those of Northangerland. As the victor of many battles instigated by Wellington and Napoleon in the Angrian tales, Northangerland returns from the wars a different man from the chivalrous Romantic hero he was before. He – like Mike Hartley – is haunted by recurring visions of the battlefield: one story written by Branwell titled ‘Misery (1835-36)’[114] has Northangerland “see” ‘formless phantoms black and strange charging towards him with a ceaseless roar’. The theme of dissonant music we saw in *Shirley* is equally present as Northangerland describes how ‘farewell music tolls’ on the local bells. Even the colour palette of both visions is paralleled heavily: ‘All white with forth, and red with gore’. In the same way that Charlotte echoes Emily’s favoured motifs such as celestial bodies, feminised Nature and mysticism in *Shirley*, she grants Hartley’s visions the consistencies of Branwell’s post-traumatic narratives. The images of marching, music and colour mimicked by Hartley are also present in another poem by Branwell previously discussed in this thesis, a long ballad which shares its name with the protagonist of *Shirley*: ‘Caroline (1837)’.[115] Like Hartley, the lamentation of the narrator of this poem, Harriet, is interrupted sporadically with images of battle, interjecting into everyday existence. Harriet’s reverie is equally disrupted ‘with shadows stretching far’, visions of battle and a ‘solemn cavalry’ that ‘[b]urst suddenly upon my sight’ and ‘[s]trange shadows that deceived the eye […] shows the pictured forms of doom’.[116] The similarities between this poem and Hartley’s visions, as well as the shared name of ‘Caroline’ between

[114] Branwell Brontë, ‘Misery’, *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), Part One (12-22) and Part Two (23-33). This poem series is also analysed in Chapters One and Two of this thesis as readings of mourning and trauma.
[115] Branwell Brontë, ‘Caroline’, *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983), (66-76).
[116] Branwell Brontë, ‘Caroline’, p.68.

the texts, strongly suggest that Charlotte is recalling her brother's work. There are also parallels between Hartley's hallucinations and those in Branwell's final years. As we have seen, Northangerland had never left Branwell's consciousness, and the subsequent Angrian language continually increased throughout his own speech, writing to Leyland of 'visions' and 'phantoms', much like 'Misery' and Mike Hartley: 'Like ideas of sunlight to a man who has lost his sight they must be visions[?] bright phantoms not to be realized again.'[117] He described himself like the tortured hero of the battlefield, the sufferers of war trauma which pervaded his juvenilia:

> it will be a ~~disheartening~~ job to work myself up again through a new lifes [sic.] battle, from the position of five years ago to which I have been compelled to retreat with heavy loss and no gain. My army stands now where it did then, but mourning the slaughter of Youth, Health, Hope and both mental and physical elasticity.[118]

Branwell was maintaining the Angrian broken soldier pretence, apparently never breaking character. However, his Angrian Caroline specifically resurfaced mere weeks before *Shirley* commenced, as a result of the Leyland letter [Figs. 5&7]. In this letter, most likely inspired by Caroline Ellis, the victim of Patrick Reid, Branwell asks Leyland:

> When you return me the manuscript volume which I placed in your hands, will you (if you can easily lay your hands on it) enclose that MS called "Caroline" – left with you many months since - and which I should not care about any more than about the volume – only I have no copies of either.[119]

The poem was at the forefront of Branwell's mind, undoubtedly feeling he could relate to the forlorn tone of Harriet in this poem. Branwell certainly believed himself, in his final months, to be a real-life parallel of their Angrian characters, battle-weary from struggling to make a name for himself, he – like a traumatised soldier – turned to drink and even signed his letters

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[117] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library)
[118] Ibid.
[119] Branwell Brontë letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated January 1848, [Letter 21], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/21 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).

during this period with the name 'Northangerland'.[120] When we consider the prolonged suffering of Branwell, which was occurring when Charlotte first began this story – Branwell having composed his missive containing the reference to 'Caroline', as well as the 'Patrick Reid' sketch, in January 1848, and Charlotte having begun the first chapters of *Shirley* by February[121] - it seems she is emulating his early literary accomplishments in order to restore the idea that these themes of violence and addiction are meant to be motifs, and not, as she believed, the lifestyle Branwell had chosen. As Shirley herself states: 'these are not the days of chivalry. It is not a tilt at a tournament […] but a struggle about money, and food, and life' (196). Perhaps Charlotte was hoping Branwell would forget his delusions of chivalry and instead focus on his career. 'Caroline' is a poem about recovering the memory of a lost loved one, 'Misery' a poem about retrieving lost mental faculties, therefore, by emulating both, Charlotte is wishing that she and Branwell could resurrect both, respectively. Although Branwell no longer cared for his former writings, as he states in the letter, through *Shirley,* Charlotte accentuates what could have resulted from his continual pursuit of the Angrian narrative. Where Emily grew with Gondal and it strengthened her writing, Branwell descended into the more destructive elements of his characters. *Shirley* is a tale of what could have been for Branwell's career, transforming his juvenile ideas into a mature narrative. She does not indulge his image of a loveable rogue – Charlotte is as unaccommodating as she was in in 1836-37 when she challenged his Rakish reimagining of Alexander Percy in 'The Pirate' with her satirical narrative 'The Green Dwarf' – nor does she believe the "lovelorn poet" act. Alcohol is not the only addiction of Branwell's which *Shirley* attempts to correct, addressing his obsession with Lydia Robinson by creating a literary

[120] An analysis of the rakish evolution of heroic Northangerland, depicted in the juvenilia pieces studied in Chapter One, into the Byronic Rougue, can be re-read in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

[121] Patsy Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 40, No.1. (January 2015), (22-33), p.25.

parallel with the unrequited infatuation of Caroline Helstone and Robert Moore.[122] In another rebuff of the hyper-masculine "Northangerland", Branwell's pitiful end is emulated in the feminine and delicate Caroline.

The expectation of the period would have put pressure on the sisters to reform the flawed character of Branwell. But, try as they might, their rescue attempts were not something that could be achieved. Like Helen with Huntingdon, sometimes the female redeemer loses something of herself in direct conflict, and so the sisters used their literary talents to expose the flaws. In an effort to preserve their own peace of mind, the three 'angels' included something of the 'devil' they could not reform within the characters of their novels, possibly in an attempt to confront in their writing the consequences of the male propensity to self-destruct. As the last sibling standing, Charlotte reflected on the waste of a life and the loss of talent and included parallels of her siblings in *Shirley.* In the wake of their irretrievable loss, Charlotte uses the cathartic affect her writing has always had for her, using it to mourn, record, and reflect on the lives and talents of her siblings in a way that comments on and gently judges their flawed characters.

[122] The unrequited love of Caroline and Robert, J.M.S Tompkins argues, can also be interpreted as a parallel of Charlotte and Heger For further reading please refer to 'Caroline Helsone's Eyes', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol.14, Issue 1 (1961) (18-28).

Bade my Sister to Arise: One Legacy Redeems Another

For an extensive period in *Shirley,* the protagonist Caroline's death appears inevitable. From the opening chapters, Caroline is depicted as "wasting away" for unrequited love of Robert Moore. Her love seems irretrievably lost as she resigns herself to life as an 'old maid': 'She could see that she was altered within the last month; that the hues of her complexion were paler, her eyes changed – a wan shade seemed to circle them, her countenance was dejected.' (107) Her physical health seems irrevocably tied to her emotional state, especially when it comes to her beloved Robert. Eventually, her mind betrays her body to such an extent that both Shirley and her companion Mrs. Pryor are required to watch over her as she approaches the seemingly guaranteed death: 'Caroline Helstone went home from Hollow's cottage in good health, as she imagined. On waking the next morning, she felt oppressed with unwonted languor […] she missed all sense of appetite: palatable food was as ashes and sawdust to her.' (251) Whilst her doom is not physically obvious, as Caroline herself states: 'Am I ill? […] I look well; why can I not eat?' (251) Caroline speaks as though the illness is happening to someone else. Her language is reminiscent of the confused Cathy of *Wuthering Heights* in her final illness: 'Why am I so changed?'[123] The unrequited love for Robert which had previously caused her to lose the bloom of her youth, results in Caroline almost losing her life as she begins to believe she will lose Robert to her best friend, Shirley: 'Of course I know he will marry Shirley […] And he ought to marry her: she can help him […] But I shall be forgotten!' (156) As J.M.S. Tompkins explains, Charlotte's 'first intention was to give Shirley to Robert Moore and to let Caroline die of a broken heart.'[124] Thus, in the chapter ominously titled 'Valley of the Shadow of Death'[125], when Caroline's heartbreak manifests into a mortal fever (251), it seems Charlotte is prepared to sacrifice the character. Her very name spells disaster and is a name which had been used repeatedly by Charlotte and Branwell in their

[123] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights,* p.105.
[124] J.M.S. Tompkins, 'Caroline Helstone's Eyes', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol. 14, Issue 1 (18-28), p.21.
[125] A reference Psalm 23:4: 'Yes, though I walk through the **valley of the shadow of death**, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.'

Angrian works, yet Daphne du Maurier claimed: 'the reason for the obsession could be the rhythmic quality of the name itself […] it rhymed very suitably with "decline".'[126] *Shirley*'s Caroline declines in health and falls into self-pity, therefore the juvenile association stands firm in this novel. As Caroline's surroundings mirror the Angrian landscape, we may argue that Charlotte also derived this protagonist's name from their childhood writings, specifically Branwell's juvenile "angel" of 'Caroline' (1837) and 'On Caroline' (1837). We only know of Branwell's Caroline in death as her sister Harriet laments the loss: 'In fright I gasped, "Speak Caroline!" | And bade my sister to arise'[127] Ostensibly, this seems to be yet another reference to the tragic loss of Emily which tormented Charlotte while writing the novel, however she had already conceived the novel prior to Emily's or even Branwell's death, as Stoneman states: '[s]he persisted with Volume I during that summer, while the whole family was distracted with worry over her brother'.[128] So Charlotte is not emulating the Angrian Caroline for her status as a sister, but rather as a private foreshadowing of her inevitable death. Caroline, like her *Shirley* counterpart, is surrounded by 'clustered chimneys' (l.27) and in the midst of a conflict of class: 'Mid sneers and scoffings' (l.310). She and her sister Harriet witness 'Nature's deep dismay | At what her sons had done' (300-310), referencing the destruction of war, much like the demolishing movement of the Luddites. It is the deathbeds of the two Carolines where the influence of this Angrian heroine truly shows.

Branwell's heroine also appears to waste away from neglect: 'Hop'st thou to light on good or ill? | To find companionship alone?'[129] As seen with her fellow Angrian ladies, such as Mary Percy in Chapter Three, it was not uncommon in Charlotte and Branwell's juvenilia for

[126] Daphne du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), p.78.
[127] Branwell Brontë, 'Caroline' (1837) *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983) (pp.66-76), ll.168-169. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.
[128] Patsy Stoneman, 'Shirley as Elegy', *Brontë Studies,* Vol. 40, No.1. (January 2015), (22-33), p.25.
[129] Branwell Brontë, 'On Caroline' (1837) *The Poems of Patrick Branwell Brontë,* Ed. Tom Winnifrith (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1983) (p.65), ll.19-20. All subsequent references will be given parenthetically.

women to wither away if one or both of their authors grew tired of them. Although Branwell does not specify which physical ailment affects his heroine, Harriet does observe that her sister's cheek is '*too* bright' ('Caroline', l.162), implying she struggled with over-heating during her final illness. Equally, Charlotte's Caroline checks her appearance in the mirror and notices 'her cheeks were rosier than usual', soon after she discovers that she is suffering from a fever. (251) She is soon bedridden and being nursed predominantly by Miss Pryor, who observes: '[w]ith all this care, it seemed strange the sick girl did not get well; yet such was the case: she wasted like any snow-wreath in thaw; she faded like any flower in drought'. (252) Charlotte is impressing upon her reader that Caroline's ailment is far less to do with the body than the heart – she cannot get well because, simply, she does not wish too. She appears content to die, and therefore not to watch Robert marry another woman, and when Mrs. Pryor asks if she is any pain, Caroline replies 'I think I am almost happy.' (252) Charlotte intelligently describes the final days of Caroline in "seasonal" terms: snow and flowers. Branwell's Caroline is portrayed with similar imagery, described as 'glitter' turned to 'rust' ('Caroline', l.237) and a flower which 'budded, bloomed, and gone' (l.90). Both women are remarkably docile in their illness, with Branwell portraying Caroline as 'mute and motionless' with death fast approaching. ('On Caroline', l.9) Correspondingly, Mrs. Pryor watches as Caroline would 'sit in her chair near the window. This station she would retain till noon was past: whatever degree of exhaustion or debility her wan aspect betrayed' (253). She keeps watch at the window, from which is 'visible the churchyard' (253), and waits to catch a glimpse of Robert on the road. Similarly, Branwell's Caroline and her sister Harriet would stare out of their tower and contemplate the flowers which were dying 'underneath yon churchyard stone!' ('Caroline', l.92) The poetical Caroline's world 'no longer smiles' ('On Caroline', l.3) and is 'void of sunlight' (l.12), just as Caroline Helstone attempts to draw 'the coverlets close round her, as if to shut out the world and sun' (l.253). Clearly, Charlotte is echoing her brother's favourite heroine because she provides the ideal aesthetic for her own long-suffering Caroline. Both are neglected beauties who have lost their bloom and die – or

almost in Caroline's Helstone's case – in relative obscurity, with only one woman watching over her. For the poetic Caroline, this is her sister Harriet – and occasionally her mother who 'strove to hide her pain' ('Caroline', l.175). Whereas for Caroline Helstone her companions are Mrs. Pryor – who is revealed to be her mother, as this chapter will discuss – and her "adoptive" sister, Shirley. The model helpless Angrian heroine of Branwell's invention was ideal for the lovelorn Caroline Helstone, however Caroline's deathbed also bears signs of another heartbroken, yet non-fictional, source, Branwell himself.

Charlotte declared in a letter, during Branwell's ongoing fall from grace, '[g]irls are protected as if they were something very frail […] while boys are turned loose on the world as if they – of all beings in existence, were the wisest and the least liable to be led astray.'[130] Her point was that Branwell had proved the supposed inherent resilience of men a falsehood, as he pined for the love of Mrs. Robinson. It is not surprising that Charlotte turned to one of Branwell's poems to describe a pitifully heartbroken subject, who refuses to get well. Intriguingly, Branwell wrote his Caroline poems from the point of view of her sister Harriet, adopting what du Maurier deems an 'artless and passionate' feminine voice.[131] In *Shirley,* Caroline suffers much as Branwell did in his final days. It appears Charlotte is implying that this behaviour is hyperbolic even in a "sensitive" female. Both Caroline and Branwell refuse to engage with the outside world as they descend into defeatism, as Charlotte recalled of Branwell following the end of his affair with Robinson: 'Branwell declares now that he neither can nor will do anything for himself .'[132] Much like Branwell, who describes himself as a 'thoroughly old man – mentally and bodily'[133], Caroline grows "old" before her time, losing the bloom of her youth as her mind and body are equally interwoven. Caroline

[130] Charlotte Brontë letter to Margaret Wooler, dated 30th January 1846, *Life in Letters,* (141-142), p.142.
[131] Daphne du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë,* p.32.
[132] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 17th June 1846, *Life in Letters,* (148-149), p.148.
[133] Branwell Brontë letter Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 24th January 1847, [Letter 18] MS.19c Brontë/02/01/18 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).

Helstone experiences a horrific fever: '[n]ow followed a hot, parched, thirsty, restless night' (251), equally Branwell describes the insomnia which resulted in his mental "torment", pronouncing 'the wreck of my mind and body which God knows have both during a short life been severely tried. Eleven continued nights of sleepless horrors reduced me to almost blindness.'[134]

We know Branwell to have died from tuberculosis, aggravated by his lifestyle and general malaise, and seemingly struggling with hallucinations and nonsensical speech as a result, his friend John Brown recalling how 'seizing Brown's hand, he uttered the words: "Oh, John, I am dying!" then, turning, as if within himself, he murmured: "In all my past life I have done nothing either great or good."'[135] Equally, Caroline Helstone struggles with nightmares in the heat of fever, and whilst Mrs. Pryor attempts to disengage an unusual locket from around Caroline's neck, the agitated girl cries: 'Don't take it from me, Robert! Don't! It is my last comfort' (254). It is through the presence of this locket – containing 'a curl of black hair too short and crisp to have been severed from a female head' (254), which Caroline had previously confessed to Shirley, and Shirley alone, that this was Robert's (137) – that the parallels between Caroline and Branwell's self-indulgent final days grow stronger. It is widely believed that one of the few "souvenirs" Branwell took from his time at Thorp Green was a lock of Mrs. Robinson's hair. Forbidden as their love was, however, he strangely chose to send the lock to his friend John Brown 'which has lain at night on his breast', and Branwell prayed to God that 'it could do so *legally*'.[136] It is not recorded whether Charlotte ever saw this lock of hair. Nevertheless, there are echoes of Branwell's forbidden love as Caroline promises 'I never tell anyone whose hair it is' (254), although Branwell evidently showed at least one person, his best friend – as, arguably, did Caroline when she told Shirley (137) – the

[134] Branwell Brontë letter to Francis Henry Grundy, c.1848, [Letter 23], MS.19c Brontë/02/01/23 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
[135] Francis Leyland, *The Brontë Family* (London: Hirst & Blackett, 1886), p.208.
[136] Branwell Brontë letter to John Brown, dated November 1843, as cited in Robert Barnard and Louise Barnard, *A Brontë Encyclopaedia* (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), p.55

sheer protest that the secret must be kept results in Caroline speaking as if she and Robert were having an affair. It seems Caroline is determined to wear the hair to the grave, and John Sutherland speculates if Branwell 'was buried still wearing on his chest the lock of hair Lydia had given him in happier days […] It would all have made a good novel.'[137] Clearly, it was, as Charlotte recreates Branwell's self-pitying sobs, and in so doing, forges a cautionary tale – warning once again against growing too attached to one person and falling too completely for one's own story. Consequently, both Branwell and Caroline symbolise what Collins christens a 'necessary death[138]': something which confirms retribution against the crimes against one's self. Caroline must die, in order to impress the moral of caring for one's self – and yet, Caroline Helstone survives. Why, if Charlotte is simulating both the circumstances and the inherent "moral" of Branwell's death, does she survive? The answer is simple, Anne Brontë died as Charlotte was halfway through *Shirley.* Charlotte was, officially, the surviving sibling.

The Rossetti "survivor", William Michael, also believed in the redemptive powers of femininity and the blessings of a sister. We have seen how in *His Family-Letters,* William Michael would utilise the innocence of childhood to assuage the "guilt" of Dante Gabriel's later scandal. His editorial intention was to humanise the "DGR" myth. Ostensibly, he had the ideal source of salvation in the sibling whose 'disposition was loving and developed into the most unbending standard of rectitude and veracity': Maria.[139] If one hoped to "save" the reputation of one family member with that of another, the presence of a nun in the family was ideal. One of the most shared stories concerning Maria, when she is discussed in biography, tells of how she attempted to save the souls of her agnostic brothers on her death bed, as Roe explains: 'Christina felt that Maria's last words, "come along", were directed at

[137] Sutherland, *The Brontësaurus,* p.27.
[138] Robert G. Collins, 'Bringing Branwell in from the Cold: Retrieving the Prose Chronicles', *Brontë Society Transactions,* Vol. 21, Issue 6 (1996) (253-259), p.253.
[139] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331. (c.1906) (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford)

her brothers and meant to inspire their conversion.'[140] Maria died 24th November 1876, unsuccessful in her final holy mission. Correspondence between William Michael and Dante Gabriel implies that Maria's brothers were not entirely welcome at her funeral. Rather than be buried in the family plot at Highgate Cemetery, as a nun, she as buried in the Sisters' Private Chapel, and William Michael sadly informs Dante Gabriel: 'Christina adds that she and Mamma think it would be most advisable for you to attend the ceremony in the Chapel *only* – not in the Cemetery.'[141] Arseneau laments that William Michael's agnosticism meant that his 'knowledge of his sisters' work in association with their respective communities is sketchy'[142], contributed to the inferior legacy of Maria. It is possible William Michael's notorious anti-doctrinal stance meant he had little interest in documenting the activities of his devout sisters. William Michael recalls how 'silence' was the only method to prevent disputes between him and Christina when it came to religion[143]. Ironic then, that he inadvertently 'silenced' Maria's remains. Nonetheless, if she attempted to "save" them in life, it seems only fitting she would protect Dante Gabriel posthumously. It was Maria's wish upon her initiation into the All Saints Sisterhood that the majority of her letters be destroyed. As Mary Arseneau explains, it was a requirement that all women who wished to join the Sisterhood had purged evidence of a public life beyond the convent walls, including writings and letters.[144] Thus William Michael's loyalties were divided between adhering to Maria's wishes, and continuing to salvage his brother.

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[140] Roe, *Rossettis in Wonderland,* p.293.
[141] William Michael Rossetti letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, dated 27th November 1876 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p.346.
[142] Ibid, p.27.
[143] William Michael Rossetti as cited in 'A Shadow of Dante: Rossetti in the Final Years (Extracts from W. M. Rossetti's Unpublished Diaries, 1882)', Ed. William E. Fredeman, *Victorian Poetry*, 20 (1982), p.218.
[144] Mary Arseneau, *Recovering Christina Rossetti: Female Community and Incarnational Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.16.

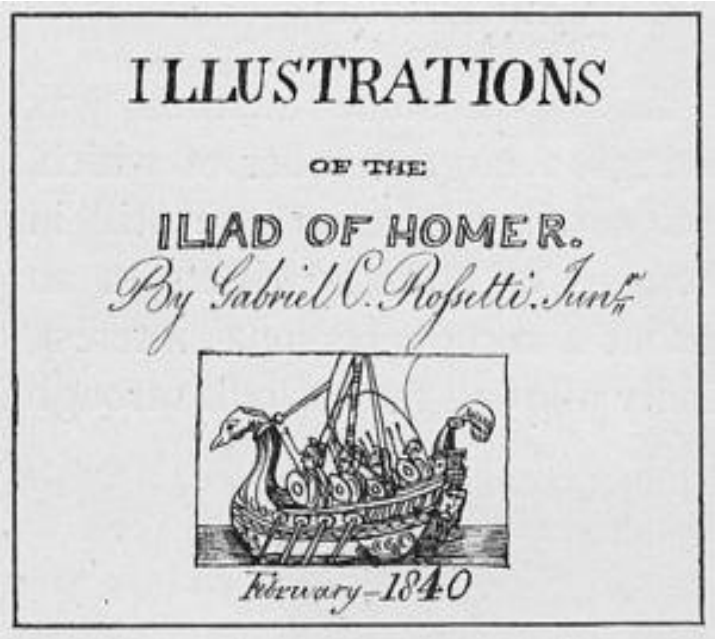

Figure 9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Illiad' (Private Collection, 1840)

Predominantly, William's family biographies have since honoured her wishes and as desired, Maria became a virtual stranger in Victorian literary history. Throughout *Some Reminiscences,* he predominantly considers those letters that pertain to his professional self, sentiment allowing some letters concerning his marriage to be included. The majority are letters to the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren and his fellow editors, with those missives to Christina and Dante Gabriel and even their mother concerning writing and publication. Consequently, Maria's name rarely appears in this collection. William Michael's *Selected Letters,* however, contains a rare missive between himself and his eldest sister: 'I know, my dear Maggie, that your longing is to die to the world, and live to Christ: to suffer, work, love, and be saved by love. There other ideals than this…'[145] Written by William Michael in 1876 on the morning of Maria's permanent removal from the Rossetti house and the loss of her 'dear and familiar presence'[146], William Michael – who deviated throughout his life between agnosticism and

[145] William Michael Rossetti letter to Maria Rossetti, dated 11th September 1873 in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* Ed. Roger W. Peattie (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), (309-310), p.309.
Significantly, this collection was compiled after William Michael's death, hence we cannot know if he personally would have published this rare surviving letter to Maria in deference to her wishes to 'die to the world'.
[146] Ibid.

potent atheism – did not necessarily understand Maria's need for self-induced exile, hence his hyperbolic description of his sister's 'living death'; he is in fact pronouncing the demise of Maria's 'public self'. Perhaps this is why he chose to include this missive within a collection of professional correspondence; this was the end of what could have been a promising literary career. These 'other ideals' include creative pursuits the siblings had been raised to aspire to. The dramatic tone implies that William wished to impress upon Maria the gravity of her decision. However, his concluding lines suggest a sense of relief that Maria could finally commit herself entirely to her religion, writing: 'may you find the peace […] and be an example of attainment to all others, and of shortcoming only to your noblest aspiration.'[147]

Maria's legacy may be limited, but William Michael was determined to ensure it was nothing less than righteous:

> If Maria's beliefs were correct, she is certainly at this moment a Saint in heaven – she having been, of all persons I ever knew, the most naturally religious minded and the most […] undeviating in doing exactly what she perceived or assumed to be right.[148]

Much like William Michael, we can assume Maria would not have wished to be included too excessively in the Rossetti biographies. William Michael ultimately knew that, in order for his works to sell, he would have to depict the artists, not just the siblings, and as Maria had recused herself from their literary circles, she could not be integrated into a literary biography. *His Family-Letters,* for instance, is dedicated to William Michel's four children '[w]ith a father's hope that relatives of Dante and Christina Rossetti, and descendants of Gabriele and Frances Rossetti will uphold the credit of their patronymic'. Although it is

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We should not overlook the sense of guilt in this letter, as William Michael may have believed it was his fault that Maria left the family home. She had been occupying her status as an 'Outer Sister' of the Anglian Sisterhood happily for many years, however once William was securely married, she became a 'complete' nun. For further details of Maria's life-defining decision, please refer to Chapter Three of this thesis.

[147] William Michael Rossetti letter to Maria Rossetti, dated 11th September 1873, p.309.

[148] William Michael Rossetti letter to Algernon Charles Swinburne, dated 5th December 1876, in *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti,* p.347.

unfortunate that all but one member of William Michael's direct family is named in the memoir's opening pages, this shows the extent of Maria's rejection of 'fame'. Not that William Michael could compile enough material to fully include her within the biographies; his editorial works alternate between compendiums of his siblings' letters – which, we have established, few of Maria's remain – or are literary biographies. It is difficult to conduct such a biography when few literary works of Maria's remain. An unfortunate consequence is that contemporary critics write sparsely of Maria, and often write with a tone of judgement. Garnett, for instance, makes Maria's own literary efforts a literal footnote[149], insinuating that if Maria chose to neglect her talents in fiction, then critics should overlook her non-fictional efforts. Therefore, the judgement of critics is not only instigated by Maria's lack of literary legacy, but the fact she did not even deign to write about religion itself. Her literary remains *Letters to my Bible Class* and *Shadow of Dante* are often considered revisions of the Bible and the works of Dante, and not Maria's own. What the contemporary treatment of Maria demonstrates is that literary criticism cannot cope with a life that chooses silence.

Within *His Family-Letters,* however, William Michael discovers a loophole in Maria's vow of silence. Though this memoir is first and foremost concerned with the life and career of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he does sporadically include anecdotes from their childhood which include Maria; more specifically, Maria's role in inspiring Dante Gabriel's career. Chapter Three of this thesis considered Maria's inspirational role in the life of Christina Rossetti, but *His Family-Letters* maintains she was equally instrumental in the origins of the Pre-Raphaelite founder. He considers Maria as a 'sister' rather than a 'Sister', but nevertheless believes in her redemptive powers to the extent that he specifies Dante Rossetti's relationship with 'his Sister Maria' as a chief feature of the 'Childhood' chapter. (Contents, p.xvi.) From Maria's

[149] Garnett, *Wives and Stunners*, p.6. Footnote No.1.
Garnett's footnote reads 'Maria Rossetti was the author of *A Shadow of Dante* (1871) and translator of *The Day Hours & Other Offices* as used by the Sisters of All Saints, an English translation of The Monastic Diurnal for her order, which remained in use until 1922.'

first appearance in the memoir, she denies her brother his "Dante Gabriel" status[150], as William Michael explains; her childhood term of endearment for him was 'Gubby', which no one else in the household used (36). Immediately, Maria is separating Pre-Raphaelite brother from Rossetti sibling, with William Michael describing how she would often attempt to save Dante Gabriel from himself. One anecdote he includes is one where the child Dante Gabriel pestered Christina to play the Desdemona to his Othello, and – when acting out the closing scene in which Othello murders his wife – took up a chisel and 'playfully motioned to strike Christina enough'. Fortunately, 'Maria had sense enough to object that it might hurt, he insisted that it would not […] he struck the chisel forcibly against his chest. Naturally there was an incision, but not a serious one.' (80) Maria is depicted as a source of inspiration to the young Dante Gabriel, both morally and creatively. Maria conducted the greatest research into her literary endeavours, devouring stories of 'Napoleon, Englishmen *versus* Scotchmen (in relation to Walter Scott's writings), Grecian mythology, and the *Iliad*. Pope's translation alone was known to her.' (81) She defied the tradition of only sons learning the Classics when she began to teach herself Greek at the same time as her brothers, partly to assist in their lessons and read the New Testament in Greek (81). Her learning sparked an interest in Homer, particularly *The Iliad,* which in turn inspired an eleven-year-old Dante Gabriel 'to please her' to undertake a series of pen-and-ink designs to accompany the epic. [Fig.9.] William Michael stresses his brother's age to emphasise his early talent, and how early Maria helped to shape his artistic preferences, especially since, although he enjoyed Homer, 'had not the glowing love of *The Iliad* which his sister entertained.' (81) These sketches, William Michael argues 'may count for something as showing the lad's ambitious temper in design, and his willingness to take up any attempt that offered'. During this period, Dante Gabriel also completed what his brother calls 'a modern subject of a patriotic turn' (87), a sketch that has not been published. However, William Michael explains that it

[150] In the same chapter segment where Dante Gabriel asks his audience to excuse him if he inadvertently refers to Dante Gabriel by his birth name 'Gabriel Charles' – as previously discussed in Chapter Four.

was a drawing of a drunken sailor taken 'from a little volume of naval anecdotes which Maria used to cherish.' (87) The drawing is a morality tale, in which a gentleman confronts a begging sailor for being "not of his parish", to which the starving sailor replies 'Sir, I lost my leg fighting for *all* parishes' (87). Three years before the seminal *Hodge-Podge,* Maria was collaborating on Dante Gabriel's art and ensuring each sketch told a story – frequently adopting an ethical standpoint. We see in this anecdote early signs of the Pre-Raphaelite Brother whose artistic fraternity would complete scenes such as: 'Found' (1854, Dante Gabriel); 'The Awakening Conscience' (1853, William Holman Hunt) and 'The Order of Release' (c.1852-53, John Everett Millais). Later in his *Some Reminiscences,* William Michael would write that the relationship between Maria and Dante Gabriel was not always harmonious, stating Gabriel was 'much handsomer than Maria' and that their passionate spirits would often jar.[151] Nevertheless, in his first family biography, William Michael perfects the creative collaboration of his older sister and brother, sanctioning the subject matters of the often scandalous Pre-Raphaelite, Maria's memory bringing a refinement to the memory of the entire family. Maria Rossetti should be studied as widely as her more famous siblings, for the moral and artistic support she offered them. Although very little original material remains of her literary life, her influence might allow a better understanding of the standards they felt compelled to reach. A standard equally expected by Charlotte of her Brontë siblings.

[151] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331. (c.1906) (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), p.14.

Figure 10. Edmund Dulac, 'My mother! My own mother!', Illustration for Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1922), p.314.

In *Shirley,* Shuttleworth observes, Caroline has 'imprisoned herself within romantic fantasies about Robert'[152] and, by accepting that such imaginings will, supposedly, never become reality, it seems she is doomed to fade away in her prison. In spite of this, Caroline survives, saved 'from the inevitable outcome of her internal collapse […] only by the discovery of a new identity.'[153] Caroline reinvents herself upon learning that Mrs. Pryor, Shirley's companion and Caroline's nurse, is actually her long lost mother: 'James Helstone was *my* husband. I say you are *mine.*' (258) Not only does Mrs. Pryor reveal her true identity, she consistently refers to Caroline as 'mine', claiming possession of her. The prisoner of unrequited adoration suddenly finds unconditional love in the form of her mother, granting Caroline an external focus of identity beyond her own fatal meditations and she is "brought back to life". The deathbed is still a deathbed however; it is the death of the formerly adrift young woman who finds comfort, Shuttleworth claims, by 'moving backwards to an earlier developmental stage'.[154] There is a strong sense of Caroline retreating to the comfort of

[152] Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, p.208.
[153] Ibid., p.207.
[154] Ibid.

childhood: 'You *must* recover. You drew life and strength from my breast when you were a tiny, fair infant […] [s]he held her to her bosom, she cradled her in her arms: she rocked softly, as if lulling a young child to sleep.' (258-259) [Fig.10.] The novel is filled with echoes of the Brontë childhood, and here we see Charlotte's hopes for the text manifested in her characters: childhood and the comfort of memory as a respite from death. There is something strictly resonant of Anne in the "rescue" of Caroline. Charlotte's heroine is consistently treated as delicate and cossetted from the beginning of the novel, in a manner highly reminiscent of Anne's titular Agnes Grey. For instance, when Caroline states her intention to seek an independent living as a governess, to which Shirley reiterates 'Nonsense […] Be a governess! Better be a slave at once.' (144) Shirley is repeating Charlotte's sentiment upon learning of Emily's experiences at Law Hill School: 'Hard labour from six in the morning until near eleven at night […] this is slavery.'[155] The main cause for concern, however, is that Caroline herself is not strong enough – physically or emotionally – to undertake the profession, as Mrs. Pryor warns her: 'you are very young to be a governess, and not sufficiently robust: the duties a governess undertakes are often severe.' (144) When Caroline approaches her uncle about possibly following this vocation, he simply states: 'Pooh! Mere nonsense! I'll not hear of governessing […] run away and amuse yourself.' (116) Caroline responds to his gruff infantilising by muttering: 'What with? My doll?' (166)

Caroline blindly views the self-disciplined work of a governess as an ideal way of becoming a grown woman and leaving her uninspiring home, much like Anne's Agnes Grey: 'How delightful it would be to be a governess! To go out into the world; to enter upon a new life […] to exercise my unused faculties.'[156] Caroline similarly seeks activity, explaining to Mrs. Pryor: 'I want severe duties to occupy me.' (144) Regardless, her opinions are dismissed like

[155] Charlotte Brontë letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 2nd October 1838, *Life in Letters,* p.59.
[156] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey* in *Wuthering Heights & Agnes Grey* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), p.292.

a child, similarly to Agnes: 'What, my little Agnes, a governess!', her father laughs.[157] Intriguingly, Caroline is not the only character to emulate Anne's first novel. Her mother Mrs. Pryor, a former governess, reveals that her maiden name was 'Miss Grey' (227), whilst her first name is, indeed, 'Agnes' (262). Moments of her personal story and speech are also highly reminiscent of Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.* Much like Helen Huntingdon, Mrs. Pryor explains that she abandoned her husband and child, changing her name to a former family surname. Much like Helen adopts her mother's maiden name of 'Graham' when in hiding. Explaining that she left, and took work as a governess, due to the torment he inflicted upon her during her marriage: 'I *have* suffered! None saw – none knew: there was no sympathy – no redemption – no redress!' (259) She recalls being fearful of Caroline's beauty when she was born: 'I beheld in your very beauty the sign of qualities that had entered my heart like iron.' (259) Her anxieties that Caroline would be taken advantage of are reminiscent of Helen's aunt upon meeting her future abusive husband, Arthur Huntingdon: 'I want to warn you, Helen […] you have a fair share of beauty, besides - and I hope you may never have cause to regret it![158] Thus, in her personal storyline, Mrs. Pryor emulates not one, but both of Anne's novels. The substantial references to *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* can be viewed as Charlotte's attempt to forge a final collaboration with Anne, a tradition which could not continue once Anne became deathly ill. Charlotte had hoped the static pages of *Shirley,* which she began writing the year before, would prevent her from looking 'backwards' at her past losses of Emily and Branwell and 'forwards' towards Anne's fate.[159] Consequently, the hours she could spare from nursing were spent attempting to resume her novel with 'something akin to desperation.'[160] However, guilt counteracted diversion as Charlotte explained to William Smith Williams: 'we do not study, Anne cannot

[157] Ibid.
[158] Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Darlington: J.M. Dent, 1893), pp.208-209.
[159] Charlotte to William Smith Williams, 18th January 1849, *A Life in Letters,* pp.223-224, p.224.
[160] Barker, Ed. *A Life in Letters,* p.241.

study now; she can scarcely read.'[161] The plural pronoun "we" emphasises the solidarity Charlotte was sustaining with her final co-author, the implication being that, if they could not study together, Charlotte would not study at all. Charlotte displayed commonality in literary inactivity as they had throughout their careers, with simple missives to her publisher inciting contriteness: 'I feel as if I were doing a wrong and a selfish thing'[162], ashamed that she was not a constant presence at her sister's side, as well as a "traitor" to their literary unanimity. Writing, in any form, when Anne and Emily could not, left Charlotte guilt-ridden, yet she explained to Williams that 'sometimes I feel it absolutely necessary to unburden my mind.'[163] Thus, in Caroline, Charlotte embodies the delicate view of Anne she perceived through the eyes of an older sister. The heroine embodies Charlotte's youngest sister in both temperament and appearance:

> It was not absolutely necessary to know her in order to like her […] Her mouth was very pretty; she had a delicate skin, and a fine flow of brown hair, which she knew how to arrange with taste; curls became her, and she possessed them in picturesque profusion… The little collar round her neck lay over a pink ribbon, and was fastened with a pink knot. She wore no other decoration. (44)

In this description, we are reminded of a portrait of a fourteen-year-old Anne completed by Charlotte [Fig.11.], in which Anne appears the doppelganger of another of Charlotte's portraits, depicting their mother: Maria Brontë. [Fig.12.]

[161] Charlotte to William Smith Williams, 18th January 1849, pp.223-224, p.223.
[162] Ibid.
[163] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.533.

Figure 11. Charlotte Brontë, 'A Portrait of Mrs. Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830)[164]
Figure 12. Charlotte Brontë, 'Portrait of Anne Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1834)

In this portrait, Charlotte reimagines her mother as a delicate Regency lady. As Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars observe, Maria's clothes are decorated with feminine trappings 'the cap is trimmed in front with bows of blue ribbon and the same blue ribbon denotes the end of the small puff sleeve and the high waistline; elaborate lace collar'.[165] Even Maria's facial features are "beautified" and decreased in size from the original artist's attempt with a 'small mouth, brown eye, long bare neck, brown curls protruding from the front of the cap.'[166] Patrick's inscription on the back of the original portrait proves that Charlotte was pleased with her efforts to prettify her mother's memory, so much so that she 'presented' the drawing 'to her dear Aunt'.[167] While Daphne du Maurier would later stress that, despite their northern upbringing, the Brontë sisters would inherit their mother's 'Cornish individuality and pride'[168], the siblings themselves were in search of a far more visible resemblance to their lost mother. It was decided amongst the household that Anne was

[164] This portrait is an ""air-brushed" 'companion piece' (Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës,* p.175.) of the 'Portrait of Maria Branwell Brontë by an Unknown Artist', please refer to Chapter One of this thesis. [Fig.1].
[165] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 175.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Patrick Brontë, dedication written on the reverse of Charlotte Brontë's 'A Portrait of Mrs. Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830) [see Fig.11]
[168] Daphne du Maurier *Vanishing Cornwall* (Cornwall: Doubleday, 1967), p.162.

Maria's mirror image. While Anne was still living, her appearance would be equally romanticised until she was 'unmistakably a Branwell'.[169] The imposed verisimilitude of Maria and Anne's appearance is evident in Charlotte's portraits of Anne; as Samantha Ellis observes: 'I look at pictures of Anne next to pictures of Maria and I'm struck by how alike they look. They both have the same cherubic faces, the same curls, the same rosebud mouths'[170]. Many critics argue that Anne's apparent resemblance to their mother was a cause of contention amongst her envious siblings[171], Winifred Gérin – in her unsympathetic "wicked step-mother" reading of Aunt Branwell – believe this led the maiden Aunt to favour Anne for her 'pretty manners and endearing ways […] [she] loved Anne at sight'.[172] The immediate admiration, rosebud lips, tight curls, delicate figures and even the ribbon around the neck of Caroline consequently recalls Anne's image – and, incidentally, Maria's, a poignant echo considering *Shirley* depicts Caroline as reuniting with her long absent mother. In death, as in these portraits, Charlotte is connecting Anne with the comforting image of Maria. The sole difference between Anne and Caroline's appearance is their eye colour. Anne was known to have violet blue eyes, where Caroline is described with the 'soft expression of her brown eyes'. (115) Tompkins explains that Caroline's eye colour was intended to mirror Charlotte's friend, Ellen Nussey:

> Caroline's appearance fits very well with what we know of Ellen's. […], curled, brown hair, the brown eyes, the clear forehead, the gentle expressive face, the modest and pretty dress are what we see in Charlotte's water-colour of her friend as a schoolgirl[173]

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[169] Winifred Gérin, *Anne Brontë* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1959, p.13.

[170] Samantha Ellis, *Take Courage: Anne Brontë and the Art of Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2017), p.14.

[171] As Joan Rees speculates, Maria, Aunt Branwell and Anne were inextricably linked in the parsonage: 'Miss Branwell took special pains over the upbringing of her favourite niece. […] Anne was to share with her aunt the room in which her mother had died.' in *Profligate Son: Branwell Brontë and his Sisters* (London: Robert Hale, 1986), p.24. However, we must consider that the fact Anne was not yet two-years-old when her mother died meant she was to share a room with her Aunt, as opposed to any favouritism.

[172] Gérin, *Anne Brontë,* p.13.

[173] Tompkins, 'Caroline Helstone's Eyes', p.19.

However, once Caroline is ill and lying in her mother's arms, Mrs. Pryor recalls her as a 'tiny, fair infant, over whose blue eyes I used to weep' (259). For the rest of the novel, Caroline possesses Anne's blue eyes. Tompkins argues the reason for Caroline's survival in this sentimental change of eye colour: 'the first chapter written after Anne's death was the 24th - that called 'The Valley of the Shadow' - in which Caroline goes down to the gates of death, but returns'.[174] The psychological "resurrection" of Caroline is Charlotte's preserving the memory of her sister and her works through her. Once Charlotte had witnessed Anne's 'quiet – Christian death' in which she 'let Anne go to God and felt He had a right to her'[175], Charlotte could not bring herself to "kill" the character. Charlotte declared in her poem 'On the Death of Anne Brontë' that she would have 'died to save' her sister[176], and while she could not rescue her in reality, she would protect the character she inspired. The last-minute alteration to Caroline's storyline demonstrates how autobiographical *Shirley* is, it is not simply a novel encouraging an examination of class and gender restrictions, but a memorandum of her former co-authors.[177] It was Charlotte's personal approach to the revealing, cathartic family biography, in which we can perceive how Charlotte intended to immortalise her siblings: Emily as the progressive proto-feminist, Anne as the delicate, moral author of feminine roles, and Branwell as obscure and unnoticed as Caroline's death was originally intended.

The distress of losing a sibling whilst eulogising another was a horror William Michael himself experienced while compiling *His Family-Letters.* Christina's death was clearly imminent and her surviving brother attempted to alleviate her pain in the only method he – and indeed the Brontës – knew how: writing. Although it has never been discussed in such terms, *His*

[174] Tompkins, 'Caroline Helstone's Eyes', p.23.
[175] Charlotte letter to William Smith Williams, dated 4th June 1849, *A Life in Letters* (236-237), p.237.
[176] Charlotte Brontë, 'On the Death of Anne Brontë' in *The Brontës: Selected Poems,* Ed. Pamela Norris (London: The Orion Publishing Group, 2003), p.23, l.4.
[177] It can be argued that *Shirley* continued to encourage collaboration amongst writers as Charlotte herself would have a kind of literary memorial when Elizabeth Gaskell used Caroline Helstone's surname as the name of Margaret Hale's home village in *North and South*.

Family-Letters is a final act of collaboration between Christina and William Michael. Her final sisterly act was to guarantee that, although William Michael is clearly biased in places, he would not be accused of giving a one-dimensional account: '[a]ware of the inevitable subjectivity of his opinion of Gabriel, he juxtaposed his hind-sighted narrative with his diary extracts […] and called in evidence from other key eyewitnesses.'[178] The star witness was his then ailing sister, Christina. The memoir had the added benefit of distracting Christina from her own impending death. In a final act of collaboration, which had begun when his mother was still alive, William Michael explains: 'I put together his (Dante Gabriel's) letters addressed to me; Christina, using a very free hand for suppressing any laudatory items or passages, did the like with the letters she had received'[179], also including those which Frances had kept. William Michael gave Christina full credit throughout his memoir, stating that he had not consulted anyone else's memories of Dante Gabriel other than Christina's who 'during the earlier weeks of my undertaking, gave me orally the benefit of many reminiscences relating chiefly to years of childhood, and often kept me right upon details as to which I should have stumbled.' (xii) The fact that William Michael specifies that Christina's own memories were provided 'orally' acknowledges her physical condition at the time of production, as he continues: '[o]n her bed of pain and rapidly approaching death she preserved a singularly clear recollection of olden facts, and was cheered in going over them with me.' (xii) Spirits were raised in both surviving Rossettis as they experienced a final act of collaboration. William as the "surviving sibling", Dante Gabriel depicted as the "heavenly poet" worthy of his 'Blessed Damozel' vision, and Christina – as ever – in between worlds.[180]

The most striking aspect of this partnership – and, indeed, both Charlotte and William Michael's biographical methodology as a whole – is the emphasis on privacy. It was

[178] Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis,* p.209.
[179] *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.2., p.555.
[180] Please refer to Chapters Three and Four of this thesis for a discussion on Christina's perpetually "divided" loyalties between her own career and her brothers'.

something William Michael would continue throughout his later life, stressing, as seen throughout this thesis, that he, as 'last sibling standing' was the custodian of many Rossetti originals. His manuscript of *Some Reminiscences* also includes the handwritten bequest that this text was presented 'to my dear daughter, Helen Rossetti Angeli'.[181] Simultaneously, throughout his family biographies, William Michael was ensuring a line of inheritance and emphasising that such original pieces could only be accessed through the descendants of Gabriele and Frances Rossetti. Subsequently, the oral nature of Christina's narrative gave William Michael a privileged position of hearing her stories first-hand. While her admirers could read his record of her recollections, her spoken memories were not available to anyone else, much like the Rossettian treasures which he had inherited from his family. It was a largely private co-authorship and only someone in the room could have fully witnessed the dynamic. Those who were not, had to trust that William Michael was giving a valid account. Christina's presence haunts the memoir, not solely because William Michael explains that he verified his childhood memories with his sister, but because Christina's death during the text's production meant her death feels prolonged throughout the narrative. Much like Charlotte Brontë, William Michael was forced to undergo an edit following the death of Christina Rossetti on 29th December 1894. Through marginalia, William Michael interjects, where he deems appropriate, to explain Christina must now be counted amongst the 'lost siblings.' For instance, when describing Dante Gabriel's funeral 17th February 1882, he notes that his brother is buried in Grave 5779 at Highgate, which, he interpolates: 'is the same grave in which my father lay buried—my mother is now there too, and, even since I wrote this very sentence, my dear sister Christina.' (224) The loss of Christina, although unfortunately prolonged in life, is abrupt yet reiterated throughout the text. In his *Some Reminiscences,* William Michael attempts to rectify his brief descriptions of her, writing with exceptional affection, introducing her to the narrative simply and suddenly as 'Pretty little

[181] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331. (c.1906) (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), (Inscription on Fly-Leaf).

Christina'. The demonstrative tone continues as William Michael emphasises their sibling connection, and declares it superior to that of Christina and their other siblings:

> As Maria and Gabriel were comparatively big children when she was a little one, and were slightly inclined at times to treat her *de haut en bas,* she relied on me as a sort of intermediary – a fact on which I have often reflect with please in later years. She was thus my chief "chum".[182]

William Michael recalls Christina, to the very end of her life, believing himself to be her greatest friend amongst her siblings. Although no one could argue with William Michael otherwise, he does also acknowledge Dante Gabriel's role in encouraging Christina to become the celebrated poetess she is today – glorifying Christina's early talent whilst portraying Dante Gabriel as a supportive sibling.

In *His Family-Letters,* Volume II, William Michael credits his and Dante Gabriel's experiments in writing with instigating a poetic calling in Christina. When recalling how he and his brother would write sonnets together, 'Christina saw us at work, and chose to enter the poetic lists. She was then eleven years of age.' (78) William Michael, in this instance, cannot write about his juvenile collaborations without including a reference to Christina's own genius; her death and the life of Dante Gabriel that he was recalling were linked. 'She indicted the following epical lines,' he continues, 'which must (I apprehend) have been nearly the first verses she ever wrote. Will the reader pardon my printing them?' (78) This explanation contains the entire tone and methodology of William Michael's grief-shaped writing style; although Dante Gabriel is, as intended, the predominant focus of the memoir, William Michael links - however tenuously - his early career with the origins of his siblings, as well as their joint enterprises. A tremendous amount of Dante Gabriel's letters are included in this collection, those addressed to Frances, William Michael, or Christina herself, impress upon the recipient

[182] William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences,* Vol.1. MS. Eng. Misc. d.331. (c.1906) (Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford), pp.15-16.

the importance of having Christina's verse widely printed. Camp Troxell observes that Dante Gabriel was 'indefatigable in bringing her before the public'[183], and the correspondence compiled verifies this claim. Even if only in postscript, Dante Gabriel consistently asks after Christina's poetry, for instance in one 1848 letter to William Michael, he simply asks: 'Does Christina still write?' (40) As Dante Gabriel stated in 20th June 1853, he would settle for nothing less from Christina than being 'energetic in her pursuit of art.' (102) However, as explored throughout this thesis, Dante Gabriel did not simply pester Christina, but provides almost collaborative advice. Rossetti admirers would recognise that Dante Gabriel provided the artwork for the vast majority of Christina's anthologies, but they would not have known prior to the publication of *His Family-Letters,* Vol. II, how often he both applauded and recommended edits to Christina. William Michael was known as the family editor, but Dante Gabriel was never shy in his opinion. As early as 1848, the siblings were sending each other their poems in their correspondence whenever they were apart, and Dante Gabriel continually celebrated Christina's work, and did not conceal that he preferred her work to his other siblings, writing to William Michael, 30th August 1848:

> I grinned tremendously over Christina's *Plague*, which however is forcible, and has something good in it. Her other is first-rate. Pray impress upon her that this […] [o]f you own, *The Completed Soul* and *The Shadow of the Flower* (as I should laconize [sic.] it) are admirable. […] *The Great Gulf Betwixt*, and *The Holy of Holies*, are also very good, though a shade less so. I do not think you have improved *The One Dark Shade* […]' (42)

By including these unedited letters, in spite of the thinly-veiled slights to his own work, William Michael is impressing that Dante Gabriel knew that she would become the poetess of the family. Initially, Dante Gabriel was inclined to favour the work of his most frequent childhood collaborator, William Michael, writing in October 1849: 'Dear William, Write at

[183] Camp Troxell, Ed. *Three Rossettis: Unpublished letters to and from Dante Gabriel, Christina, William*, p.140.

once, and if you have done anything send it: if not, something of Christina's.' (81) Christina's work appears to serve as a substitute in the absence of William Michael's, however Dante Gabriel was entirely aware of Christina's ability, telling Frances towards September 1848: 'I recognize the influence of Christina's powerful mind.' (43) Soon after, as *His Family-Letters demonstrates,* Dante Gabriel became Christina's most fervent supporter. Consequently, William Michael is offering an enthusiastic alternative to the meddling older brother who insisted upon Christina's relationship with Collinson – to his sister's detriment – and hectored Christina for literary distraction following the death of Elizabeth Siddal. Without her brothers, as the text stresses, the world would not have known Christina Rossetti's earliest works. By preserving their memory, we can credit William Michael, and even to some extent, Charlotte Brontë with preserving their siblings' talent.

Artistic representations of loved ones provide a way for painters to capture the essence of a person in perpetuity. Perhaps then, it is excusable for literary artists to also use their writing as a form of eulogy for those they have lost. The cathartic effect of expressing their feelings of affection, admiration and respect for those who have passed away may be a method of alleviating the sense of abandonment. Their writing can also be used as a tool for demonstrating rivalry, unfairness and the loss of collaborative talent. Charlotte Brontë immortalised her sisters in a romanticised, even angelic, way to preserve a connection to them. Her brother, the devil rather than the angel, was mourned, sometimes angrily, through her writing for the waste of his talent, but maybe this was a way of disguising her sadness at the waste of a life. Charlotte Brontë created a narrative invisible to the wider public to express her feelings, whereas William Michael Rossetti, using letters and family stories, documented in biographical form the real people behind the public misrepresentation of them. Preserving the angel was, for him, a literary correction of the forgotten, the misunderstood, and the sometimes maligned, loved one. Writing allowed him

to expose lost talents whilst undertaking a final collaboration, and perhaps provided a medium through which he could mourn the sibling hiding behind the persona of the artist.

CONCLUSION:

Recognising the role of Familial Collaboration in the Literary Legacies of the Brontë and Rossetti Families

This research into the literary collaboration of the Brontë and Rossetti families not only increases our knowledge of these writers; the study of literary co-operation in itself grants new insights into various strands of criticism including childhood studies, gender dynamics, cultural studies and the elegiac narrative. An analysis of how the literary apprenticeships of these particular sibling groups began is vital in rectifying the damage done by twentieth-century criticism, which valued some siblings above others. Both sibling circles contain: a scandalous artist, in the forms of Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; a visionary poet, in Emily Brontë and Christina Rossetti; a custodian of the family legacy with "surviving" siblings Charlotte Brontë and William Michael Rossetti; and finally the siblings considered not "Brontë/Rossetti enough", 'literary Cinderella' Anne Bronte[1] and the 'Rossetti who became a nun', Maria.[2] Familial interaction moulded the most seminal texts of these authors and yet biography and criticism rarely explore them as a unit. Thus this research is at the forefront of two innovative scholastic approaches; the text-based family biography and the emergent genre of juvenilia studies. This field emphasises upon the historical significance of early writings and manuscripts and encourages scholars to place them on an academic equivalent to adult works, regardless of their unrefined nature. This thesis concurs with Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, who argue 'the time has come to listen to the authentic literary voice of the child […] to recognise the child's own authentic voice and authority, and to explore a category of literature that has been largely neglected.'[3] However, this study not only considers the authorial vision of these literary children, but how the children viewed themselves as authors. Both Brontë and Rossetti sibling groups approached what we have

[1] Catherine Paula Han, 'The Myth of Anne Brontë', *Brontë Studies,* Vol.42, No.1. (2017) (48-59), pp.48.
[2] Henrietta Garnett, *Wives and Stunners* (London: Macmillan, 2012), p.6.
[3] Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, Eds. *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.1.

come to view as their authorial "training", as stepping stones to publication – trusting each other's judgement; almost growing reliant on the support, as well as the supervision, of their literary parents.

Chapter One of this thesis verified the key role the Brontë and Rossetti matriarchs played in these defining years. In Maria Branwell Brontë's case, her ghost haunted the parsonage through her textual legacy and her relics. A shipwreck nearly a decade prior, in which many of her possessions were lost, separated her further from her children. Subsequently, the shipwreck as a metaphor for loss became a constant feature of the Brontë juvenilia, particularly in Branwell and Emily's Gondal writing. Such watery tragedies featured in more famous works like *Agnes Grey, Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*. While the Brontës were persistently reminded of their mother's death, there was little to grant insight into her life and personality. As a result, they treasured the few articles which could: Patrick's poetry dedicated to Maria and the relics that survived the shipwreck, in particular her anthology of *The Remains and Poetical Works of Henry Kirke White.* In search of a connection with their mother, the children scribbled and drew characters from the Glasstown Confederacy throughout this edition. The graffiti of the Brontës allows us to identify extraordinary, and previously unforeseen, parallels between Kirk White's verse and the storylines and characters from Angria and Gondal, especially Emily and Anne's depictions of Queen A.G.A. which in turn inspired *Agnes Grey* and *Wuthering Heights.* Subsequently, this research also emphasises the importance of exploring marginalia. Through exploring familial collaboration, this thesis has discovered previously unknown influences between the Brontës' lost mother and 'forgotten Romantic'[4] Henry Kirke White. The influence of Frances Rossetti on her ambitious children was far more direct, but no less significant. Frances Rossetti set a standard to which her children were always aspiring, as authors and siblings; even as women, with Maria and Christina engrossed their selves in her pious nature. She brought the

[4] Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (London: James Cawthorn, 1809), p.364.

connections and successes of the Polidori family to her marriage and motherhood, encouraging her children to collaborate with her through an author/editor dynamic, with her father Gaetano as the "publisher". She inspired co-operation amongst her children, channelling their team work and friendly rivalry into pieces such as *Hodge Podge*. The siblings competed to meet deadlines, mimicking the atmosphere of professional literary networks in preparation for adulthood. They thrived on this supportive environment to such an extent that they attempted to recreate Frances' editorial eye, in her absence, through *The Illustrated Scrapbook*. The reliance these siblings felt towards this format reveals new insights into the first Pre-Raphaelite venture, *The Germ,* as the brothers assumed their mother's structure in order to bond with their new brethren. Both Maria Brontë and Frances Rossetti instilled a sense of legacy in their children, evidenced in how they were taught to value and preserve their then small archives of handwritten family collaborations. The children inherited their mothers' literary ambitions, and whilst these pressures often daunted the siblings later in life, in childhood they were assured and immersed themselves in proving – often through their family relics – that age, class and gender can be overcome to achieve this goal.

Evidence that talent could overcome such social barriers was a persistent feature of both Brontë and Rossetti households in the form of their patriarchs, Patrick Brontë and Gabriele Rossetti. Chapter Two of this thesis considers how the presence of these poets, who succeeded against all odds, shaped the families' communal ambition. As a father, Patrick has often been celebrated for the sole action of gifting Branwell the momentous box of soldiers which inspired the siblings to collaborate. As an author, his textual legacy is rarely acknowledged. In fact, it was Patrick's experiences in the midst of rebellion, famine and seemingly imminent destruction – with both his Anglican beliefs and the culture of the era forecasting the apocalypse – which shaped the foundations of the children's juvenilia. The siblings collaborated with Patrick's poetry, short stories and sermons in order to mimic this

sense of threat in the civil wars of Angria and Gondal. Patrick, in many ways, had lived the experiences his children wished to, overcoming his modest upbringing and appearing in print. The unlikely success of the father also encouraged the ambitions of the Rossettis, as Gabriele surpassed his equally humble background to become a well-known, well-timed exile, profiting from the cultural preoccupation with Romanticism to sell his poetry. His children were drawn to his verse concerning his Italian heritage and his banishment. William Michael Rossetti, for instance, learned from his father's "publicity" techniques as he grew into the family biographer. He moulded his father's unedited biography into the image Gabriele had originally constructed of his life and personality – in the same way that he would come to do with his elder brother's memoirs. Gabriele often marketed himself as a rebellious figure, a persona which was of particular interest to his eldest son, Dante Gabriel, whose earliest plays demonstrate an advanced understanding of tyranny and injustice. Where his father had learned to "sell" himself as an exotic, radical writer, Dante Gabriel understood the effectiveness of creating the alluring public persona which influenced his seminal years as a Pre-Raphaelite founder. Where Gabriele's sons collaborated with him on the page, Christina – in her role as her father's nurse – co-operated with him directly, inspired by his diplomatic verse. Through tackling supposedly "unfeminine" topics such as these, Christina was forging a feminist voice which viewed gentility as an asset – a tone which would shape her career. Ironically, collaboration was often used to explore individuality as the Rossettis mimicked their father's works in order to exercise creating a "saleable" image for themselves. The result was often sibling rivalry, particularly between Maria and Dante Gabriel, as they competed over who could do justice to Gabriele's Italian heritage and heroes. Thus, intergenerational ambition was a key aspect of the Brontës' and Rossettis' childhoods, although the natural desire for approval from a parent often resulted in sibling rivalry. As such we see the co-dependent circles that existed throughout these families in life and literature.

Both were raised in ambitious but sheltered apprenticeships. The childhood of the Brontë siblings is often romanticised into a vision of four children sequestered from wider society amongst the Yorkshire moors. As Juliet Barker observes, the image of the children 'growing up in physical and social isolation, excluded from all the normal preoccupations of ordinary life, let alone genteel society' has become 'the essence of Brontë mythology'[5] with their separation from other children explicating their reliance on each other's opinions. In contrast, the Rossetti children lived their entire lives in the Bohemian circles of London. However, William Michael recalls that the family were exceptionally private and, to distract them from the lack of company of children their own age, their parents would play cards and chess with them and encourage their collective writings. The Rossetti household was reserved, Walt Whitman wrote of 'that' Rossetti family as 'a remarkable one – steeped in finished soil […] perhaps a little too refined, too delicate, for the brush and break of this tumultuous world.'[6] Consequently, a tight-knit collaboration naturally germinated amongst the ambitious young siblings. The third and fourth chapters of this thesis measure how the textual styles of these families altered once these families were reluctantly thrust into the "tumultuous" wider world. Chapter Three details how the Brontë and Rossetti women were pressured to leave home and seek work, making them "mature" beyond juvenilia. Authorial frustration developed between the siblings - the sisters envied the societal freedom of their brothers, and desired to restore the unbiased nature of juvenilia. Amongst their co-authors, the Brontë and Rossetti sisters could explore any literary device and theme they wished, from the supposedly "feminine" motifs of piety and romance to the "hyper-masculine" storylines of civil war and rebellion. Once they entered "feminine" work however, a dichotomy between the creative securities of childhood and financial security of adulthood arose. Both Brontë and Rossetti vented their displeasure through cathartic writings, such as Charlotte Brontë's Roe Head journal, her sisters' shared diary papers and Christina Rossetti's

[5] Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Abacus, 2010), p.105.
[6] Walt Whitman, c.1888, cited in Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1906), p.438.

Maude. These pieces were created to ask the male siblings, and the wider patriarchy, to recognise the injustice of limiting female creativity, and to forge a new co-operation amongst the female siblings which sought solidarity in sisterhood.

The sisters hoped that early collaboration had taught their brothers to become the exceptions to the patriarchy but this was not always the case. If juvenilia terminates once a writer has "matured", in Chapter Four we saw how Branwell Brontë and Dante Gabriel Rossetti attempted to accelerate the process. They had learned – or rather misinterpreted – through writers such as James Hogg and Lord Byron that the key to public success was to maintain an enigmatic, inherently "masculine" image. This required relinquishing their female co-authors and seeking new brotherhoods. Branwell Brontë did this with William Robinson and his friends Joseph Bentley Leyland and Francis Grundy; Dante Gabriel networked with Ford Madox Brown and his Pre-Raphaelite Brethren, including his actual brother William Michael. They immersed themselves in masculinity, hoping that it would help them to navigate the pressures of adulthood while they carried the burden of the entire family's literary ambitions. If society favoured the eldest son, Branwell and Dante Gabriel would have to succeed on behalf of the siblings who were working to support this dream. As a result, although these men were attempting to disconnect from their co-authors, they struggled with the transition and remained attached to their juvenilia. Seeking to reinvent these pieces - Branwell evolved the Angrian Northangerland into the profligate Rougue and Dante Gabriel consistently re-edited 'The Blessed Damozel' in the Pre-Raphaelite image - they never fully "outgrew" their collaborative writings. Although their co-operation diminished, the connection to the security of childhood was never fully severed. While Dante Gabriel would often use his position in the artistic world to bolster his siblings' reputations and work with them again – especially Christina and William Michael, Branwell never matured beyond his teenage exercise in independence. The rest of the siblings could not comprehend how their family dynamic had altered so dramatically from youth, and as a

result there developed a read-and-respond series of writings. Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Christina Rossetti's feminist poems *Queen of Hearts* and *The Poor Ghost* each demanded recognition of the damage done to their familial creative alliance.

In studying how these collaborations gradually disbanded, we begin to see the origins of our contemporary perceptions of each sibling. Perception of oneself in the wider world, as well as the pressures of pursuing a goal shared by one's entire family, separates the mind of the adult author from the co-creator of juvenilia. This was often a necessary step in the development of these authors; figures such as Branwell Brontë demonstrate the dangers of becoming over-reliant on one's early writings. Nevertheless, in both families there remained a desire to return to the security of the early sibling dynamic. The final chapter of this thesis determined how the 'surviving siblings' of both families nostalgically forged a literary family reunion in their autobiographical texts - Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley,* which mimics the scenery and characters of the Glasstown Confederacy, and William Michael's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters,* in which he acts as editor to the family once more, collating their letters and conferring with Christina on her deathbed. This coveted 'recovery' of the family dynamic verifies the impact early collaboration had upon the Brontë and Rossetti psyches. Thus, through this thesis's innovative methodology of assimilating family biography with in-depth textual analysis we can measure how substantially the siblings co-authorship shaped their writing styles and their interpretation of the world beyond the home. Consequently, we have a method that can be applied to other scholarly families such as the Levys and Marxs, and beyond the nineteenth-century into the extensive Stephens/Woolf/Bell/Cameron family tree, the Wollstonecraft/Godwin/Shelleys, the Wordsworths, Amis's, Sitwells, and so forth. The methodology can even extend to artistic 'groups', such as the Pre-Raphaelites; the Inklings; the Bloomsbury Group, and so on. In doing so, we can achieve further comprehension of biographical studies, gender studies, and depictions of childhood and family in popular

fiction. Thus while findings of this research have increased our knowledge of the Brontë and Rossetti families and the importance of literary collaboration within then, the methodology developed over the course of this research offers has the capacity to uncover further revelations throughout literary history.

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10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Ecce Ancilla Domini!', (Close-up of Christina Rossetti posing at the Virgin Mary) (Tate, circa.1849-1850). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive*: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s44.raw.html> [accessed 18th January 2016]
11. Robert Southey, 'Letter to Charlotte Brontë, dated 12th March 1837' (Extract, with Charlotte Brontë's omission request) (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1837). Image obtained via *TheBritishLibrary* (website) <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/letter-from-robert-southey-to-charlotte-bronte-12-march-1837> [accessed 8th March 2018]
12. Reproduction of Emily Brontë's Diary Paper (Location unknown, 30 July 1841). Reproduction from Clement Shorter's, *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1896), p.146. Image copied from source material.
13. Lucy Madox Brown, 'Maria Rossetti as an Anglican Nun' (Private Collection, circa.1873/74). Image copied from *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis,* by Angela Thirlwell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.171.

CHAPTER FOUR: Prodigal Poets

1. Branwell Brontë, 'Horse with Rider' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1834-35). Image obtained via *ArtUK* <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/horse-with-rider-20977> [accessed 8th April 2018]
2. Ford Madox Brown, 'Byron's Dream' (Manchester Art Gallery, 1874). Image obtained via *ArtUK* <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/byrons-dream-205506> [accessed 8th April 2018]

3. Charlotte Brontë, 'Alexander Percy, or Northangerland' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa.1830-32). Image obtained via Hannah Davies, 'The Brontës and War', *Arts and Humanities Research Council,* 2016 <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/readwatchlisten/features/brontesandwar/> [accessed 10th October 2017]
4. Branwell Brontë, 'The Pirate' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, circa. 1835). Image copied from *The Art of the Brontës,* Eds. Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.241.
5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Rocking-Horse' (Private Collection, circa.1834). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s1.rap.html> [accessed 5th February 2016]
6. William Michael and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Blood's Winter' (Special Collections Library, Duke University, 1848)
   Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/35-1848.dukems.rad.html#35-1848> [accessed 5th February 2016]
7. Theodor Von Holst, 'The Wish' (Holst Birthplace Museum, 1840). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/op77.rap.html> [accessed 5th February 2016]
8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Regina Cordium' (Johannesburg Art Gallery, c.1860). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s120.raw.html> [accessed 5th February 2016]
9. Branwell Bronte letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland, dated 25th November 1845. [Letter 9], MS.19c Bronte/02/01/09 (Special Collections, Leeds University Library).
   Image obtained via *Special Collections* (website) <https://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections/view/1887/letter_from_branwell_bront_to_joseph_bentley_leyland_25_november_1845_bc_ms_19c_bront020109?fbclid=IwAR3he8grHHIP8d2Gs9DOSMWw7x1XXfTJvLodPPpqT6-K9mi1S3cT3SOxB3k> [accessed 2nd April 2017]
10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Beata Beatrix' (Tate Britain, c.1864-70). Image obtained via *tate.org.uk* <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rossetti-beata-beatrix-n01279> [accessed 16th September 2017]

CHAPTER FIVE: Last Sibling Standing

1. George Richmond, 'Charlotte Brontë', (National Portrait Gallery, 1850). Image obtained via *NationalPortraitGallery* (website) <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw00798/Charlotte-Bront> [accessed 17th March 2018]
2. Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, 'William Michael Rossetti', (Wightwick Manor, circa.1895) [Property of the National Trust]. Image obtained via *ArtUK* <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/william-michael-rossetti-18291919-131483> [accessed 17th March 2018]
3. T.H. Robinson 'Shirley put her arm around Caroline (Illustration) from Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (London: Collins, 1910), p.121. Image copied from the source material.
4. Branwell Brontë, 'The Pillar Portrait' [Close-Up of Emily (right) and Anne (left)] (The Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1834).
5. Branwell Brontë, 'Patrick Reid "turned off", without his cap' [Close-Up], Reverse of a Letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland (Property of Leeds University Library, January 1848)
6. Branwell Brontë, 'Self-Portrait', (The Brontë Parsonage Museum, c.1840)
7. Branwell Brontë, 'Patrick Reid "turned off", without his cap', Reverse of a Letter to Joseph Bentley Leyland (Property of Leeds University Library, January 1848)
8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Joan of Arc Kissing the Sword of Deliverance' (Musée des Beaux Arts de Strasbourg, 1863). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/9-1879.s162.raw.html> [accessed 20th July 2018]
9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Illiad' (Private Collection, 1840). Image obtained via *The Rossetti Archive* <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s3.raw.html> [accessed 20th July 2018]
10. Edmund Dulac, 'My mother! My own mother!', Illustration for Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1922), p.314. Image copied from the source material.
12. Charlotte Brontë, 'A Portrait of Mrs. Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1830). Image copied from *Celebrating Charlotte Brontë: Transforming Life into Literature in* Jane Eyre by Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson (Norwich: Swallowtail Print Ltd., 2016), p.17.
11. Charlotte Brontë, 'Portrait of Anne Brontë' (Brontë Parsonage Museum, 1834). Image obtained via 'The Five Faces of Anne Brontë', *mick-armitage* <http://www.mick-armitage.staff.shef.ac.uk/anne/ann5face.html> [accessed 2nd November 2017]